

Alike In Indignity

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Alike In Indignity

by [Spoon888](#)

Summary

An AU where Starscream is a bored Autobot with no morals and Megatron finds great joy in defiling one of Optimus Prime's best soldiers on a weekly basis.

It's purely physical, of course, because letting it be anything more than that would be ridiculous...

Chapter 1

Optimus had been noticing a marked change in his arch nemesis for some time now.

Something seemed to be distracting his usually driven opponent, playing on Megatron's mind more than thoughts of fighting and winning and victory. Optimus no longer had to brace himself for a savage tackle when he arrived at the scene of a raid, because Megatron now seemed to have better things to do than steamroll through his Autobots and wrestle him on the ground.

And now, it seemed, he had better things to do than even *show up*.

Optimus online his comm, ducking behind the cooling tower when a formation of seekers shot overhead. "Location on Megatron?"

Jazz answered first. "*He-- headed east.*" The saboteur panted over the comm, his voice cracking with static and distorted by nearby gun fire. "*Didn't engage. Must be-- to something-*"

The comm crackled out, and Optimus shut it off with a frustrated hum. Overhead the Aerialbots had taken to the air and engaged in a dogfight against the seekers. Blaster fire was hitting the ground in sporadic bursts as they all tried to shoot at each other in one big mess of wings and nosecones. With a squint, Optimus noted Starscream was conspicuously absent and therefore unable to guide the less experienced flying gestalt.

Not the first time he'd left them to fend for themselves either.

And attempts at hailing Starscream's comm did little good.

He was lucky Megatron was elsewhere. His factions entire counter assault was in shambles and he could barely fight *himself* when every tactic they'd planned was useless without the proper air support. He and the majority of his ground troops had to remain under cover, shooting from their shelters lest they ended up a smoking hole in ground.

Without Starscream to chase the Decepticon seekers in circles, Thundercracker and Skywarp were picking them off like cyber-ducks sitting in tar.

Optimus was about to consider pulling back, waiting for Prowl to arrive with a wave of reinforcements, at the risk of the Decepticons having more time to steal and pillage and kill- when with a ground shaking rumble the wall beside him exploded with a fusion blast.

Megatron.

Optimus rolled with the blast, catching himself on his hands and knees and shaking loose shrapnel from his armour. Megatron was shouldering through the hole he'd created, fanged denta sparkling menacingly. Optimus surged to his pedes and launched himself at Megatron before the cannon could recharge.

But Megatron was in fine form, his optics bright and pedes light as he ran, dodged Optimus's kick and punched him in the side, a gleefully ferocious grin marring his face. He was in a disturbingly good mood.

"Slow today, Prime!" He laughed, circling him like predator on the prowl.

Optimus was no prey. He locked his mask tight to his face, axe at the ready.

Overhead the *shroom* of a jet's thrusters filled the air, too fast to be anyone but Starscream. The tri-coloured streak of armour fired off a volley of shots, scattering Megatron's seekers. Behind him the Aerialbot's reformed, and the odds shifted back in favour of good.

Megatron's optics flicked up, his mouth curling wryly when he too noticed the turning tide of the battle in the sky.

"This ends here, Megatron." Optimus dragged his attention back, pointing his axe at him.

Megatron rolled his shoulders, loose and ready, "It's only just begun, Prime."

They had won, eventually, but the Decepticons had made off with over a hundred cubes and inflicted millions of dollars worth of property damage. The humans weren't happy, and neither was Optimus.

Trudging back to the *Ark* with the others, Optimus held out a servo and stopped Starscream in his tracks.

As one of his best, and brightest, Optimus had never had reason to call Starscream's loyalty into a question. He had stood by his side for thousand of years, the lows and the highs. He was their airforce's saving grace, and invaluable in many ways. But-

"I showed *up*, didn't I?" Starscream snarked before Optimus had even had the *chance* to reproach him. He was stood with his arms across his chest, wings flicking with attitude and lip curled cruelly.

"Showing up' isn't enough when it's your comrades' very lives on the line." Optimus used his most solemnly disappointed voice- though it rarely ever worked on Starscream.

"They're big boys now, Prime." Starscream adjusted his stance so his servos were on his hips. "They can look after themselves."

Optimus nodded absently, now taking note of Starscream's surprisingly dishevelled appearance. He had been absent for a great deal of the battle, and untouchable in the sky. He hadn't taken any hits, nor had he engaged any Decepticons in close combat. But for someone so renowned for taking pride in his appearance...

There were scuffs on his knee pads, the sky blue armour now smeared with mud and grass stains, like he had landed heavily on them and skidded. A row of dents crinkled the underside of his right wing. They looked like finger indentations, as though someone had grabbed and pulled. There was a smudge on his cockpit too. A handprint, if Optimus didn't know any better. A big one.

He tilted his helm questioningly, and noticing where his attention had wandered, Starscream stepped back, arms wrapping around himself again. "If you're *quite* finished-"

Optimus wasn't.

"What kept you?" He asked, his disappointment curbed by concern. If Starscream had been kept from his duties by some sort of ambush, been *hurt*- "Starscream, you're not-?"

"Not what?!" Starscream got very uppity, as he always did when someone asked questions he didn't

want to answer. "I can't stand around talking to you all cycle, Prime, I have work to do, new manoeuvres to prepare. Since those mechlings you call my 'airforce' are so incapable of thinking for themselves..."

Optimus frowned behind his mask, "Very well. But Starscream?"

The seeker turned, wings stiffening in a cringe. "What?"

"Don't let it happen again."

Starscream flashed him a smile, optics as sharp as daggers, "I'll try not too."

Starscream was sensible enough not to answer his comm until he'd made it to the privacy of his own quarters. He accepted the annoying little pinging hail with an optic roll, wondering what his needy little paramour could possibly want now.

"What happened to not using this frequency?!" He snapped, dropping to his berth and wincing when his carelessness jostled sore components. His quick pre-battle romp had lasted longer and been rougher than he'd planned. "What do you want?"

"*Hello to you too*," Megatron's rasping voice answered with faux charm. He sounded rather chipper for a mech who'd just had his tailpipe kicked in by Prime- Starscream had seen it happen from the air.

"*I wanted to see how you'd faired. Prime looked **beyond** disappointed with his favourite little solider.*"

"Unlike you, I can handle Prime." Starscream smirked, unseen. "You were too rough again. He noticed."

There was a flustered sound on the other end of the comm. "*Noticed what?!*"

"Not enough to put two and two together," Starscream reassured. "But we'll have to be more careful in future. Practice some subtlety. I found a twig between my wings again..."

"*I wouldn't have to resort to pinning you to trees if you accompanied me back to my ship.*"

Ah yes, the Decepticons' spaceship turned submarine. "Fix the leaks and I'll think about it."

He heard resentful grumbling on the other end.

"You could come here." Starscream pointed out, flopping back against his berth. He spread his arms out. "My berth is plenty big enough for a dirty old warbuild like you."

"*And fall into one of your clever little Autobot traps? Nice try.*"

"If I were only doing this to try and trap you, I wouldn't be quite so liberal with what I let you do to my frame." Starscream pointed out, a little indignant, but mostly amused at Megatron's ridiculous paranoia. In the months they'd been... more than just enemies, he hadn't once given Megatron a reason to distrust him.

Wearing the Autobot badge was enough to keep him at arms length in Megatron's mind it seemed.

"I have energon to spare and the whole night to celebrate." Megatron continued, ignoring his little comment. *"More than enough reason for you to come to me."*

"Maybe I don't trust *you*," Starscream pointed out, only half teasing. Because the last thing he needed was to fall asleep in Lord Megatron's berth and wake up the next morning in the *Nemesis's* brig, being held ransom.

Would Prime even bother to negotiate him back? What would he say if he knew what he had been getting up to whilst his comrades had been fighting and bleeding to save organic lives?

"Somewhere more mutual." Starscream relented. "And private."

A low snort. *"Fine."* Megatron agreed. Then hung up, but a moment later a message appeared on Starscream's comm.

The usual place

He let out a little self satisfied hum, rolling onto his front on his berth.

Seeing Megatron twice in one cycle? Today *was* a good day.

Their 'usual place' was a small island near the west coast of a large fresh water lake. It was quiet, isolated, and impossible to drive to. If Starscream ever planned to ambush Megatron there, he'd be unable to rely on the help of his wheeled comrades.

He landed on the island's muddy edge, pedes sinking into the damp earth and ruining the thorough clearing out he'd just given them. Starscream often dragged finely manicured digits across his armour with disapproving tuts, and wanting to impress him, Megatron had made an effort today.

He felt rather foolish, scrapping his pede against the trunk of a tree in an attempt to remedy the situation, grumbling under his breath and glancing skyward.

"You're late." An oily voice called to him.

On the other side of the shore, perched coquettishly on a large overhanging rock, Starscream was silhouetted against the setting sun. The orange glow of dusk dyed the pearly white of his armoured wings. He was reclined gracefully, full hips tilted towards Megatron, helm propped up by his sky blue servo. A beckoning tilt of his helm and a flick of his wing, and Megatron was crossing the muddy shore to reach him, drawn by his wordless charm.

The still lake glistened fiery red behind him. Starscream rose into a seated position, wings spreading out. Angelic.

No. Deadlier. Like a siren luring him out to danger.

They met wordlessly, Megatron coming to stand between thighs that spread to accommodate him. He claimed Starscream's parted mouth with a rough, forceful kiss, noses squashing clumsily. Starscream was never easily subdued for an Autobot. He nipped back, sharp denta catching the soft derma of Megatron's lips reproachfully, but he stroked the back of his helm too, touch slow and

endearing.

"Don't rush me." Starscream muttered, pulling back. "You said we had the night."

"We do." Megatron promised, stroking his narrow waist. He tipped Starscream's helm back and kissed the softer derma under his chin, then shifted down to suck at the cables of his throat.

He had to remind himself to take his time. So often their meetings were a spur of the moment, catching glimpses of one another across the battle field and struggling to find shelter away from prying optics.

He remembered their earlier days, when they'd been in denial enough to think they were still fighting, when they'd pin one another to the ground, grappling away from the battle but neither of them calling for help.

He was bigger than Starscream, yet he had always ended up with his back in the mud, Starscream pinning his wrists overhead.

He'd never seen the use in fighting himself free.

Starscream laid back across the slopping rock, letting his helm hang over the edge, towards the rippling water. His Autobot blue optics glistened up at Megatron as the snick of his panel sounded. Megatron kept his gaze, releasing his own codpiece.

He slipped inside hot, soft mesh with a hum, watching Starscream's optics flutter shut with a little sigh. His wings twitched in time with the callipers of his valve. Megatron purred, rolling his hips forward to sink in to the hilt. Starscream was compliant and supple beneath him. Megatron paused, taking a moment to relish the submission of an Autobot, one of Prime's favourites.

He thought about how often he had dirtied the red insignia's of Starscream's wings with his seed, and chuckled darkly.

Starscream's optics snapped open to roll condescendingly. "The sun is setting, *stud*. Are you going to frag me or not?"

"Eager?" Megatron arched a brow, and lowered himself over Starscream to press their frames close. He planted his servos on the flat armour of Starscream's wings and enjoyed the swell of his warm cockpit against his chest.

Starscream curled his limbs around him, servos running up and down his back, "Always."

After the rush of their earlier meeting that day, Megatron took things slow, rocking and grinding. Starscream's helm hung back again, his back arching and pushing his cockpit up against Megatron. Megatron kissed his neck, bit his shoulder, rubbed the heels of his servos against the painted insignias on Starscream's wings, as though his subconscious wanted him to rub them away.

Not for the first time he thought about how much nicer they'd look with purple. And that Starscream's optics would be so much more vibrant if they were crimson and dark.

Starscream's legs closed about his waist, crossing at the ankles. Warm thrusters pressed against the small of Megatron's back, urging him on.

Megatron reared up again, standing over Starscream and fragging him earnestly now, sharply. Starscream cried out with every shove, as though surprised by their intensity, his voice echoing across the still water until he jerked, and the stone beneath his aft darkened with lubricant.

Megatron dropped to his servos again and kissed him hard, hips still pumping. Dazed from his overload, Starscream kissed back lazily, mumbling and grunting until Megatron held deep, moaned into his mouth, and overloaded.

Starscream stroked his helm, smile curving his lips. His engining was purring like a pampered house cat's. Megatron nuzzled into the side of his helm, inhaling his scent, vaguely Autobot-y, but mostly Starscream, perfect and delicious nonetheless.

He slipped out of Starscream and dropped to sit on another rock, unsubspacing the cube he'd promised from his subspace.

After a moment, and with a long, displeased groan, Starscream began to rise. Megatron held up the cube.

Starscream took it with a nod, rubbing at his back groggily. "You're heavy."

Megatron had heard that complaint a hundred times before. "Perhaps if you accompanied me back to the *Nemesis* so we can do this on a berth like a civilised couple--"

"Couple?" Starscream snorted condescendingly, taking a drink. "And why should I let you lure me to your underwater lair? The *Ark* is far more accessible."

Megatron good mood sunk. "It's too dangerous."

"And letting me prance about the *Nemesis* isn't?"

"*You* are not the leader of the enemy faction." Megatron reminded him, pointing his cube at him. "You cannot afford me the same protections I could you."

"I'm not going to parade you through the base!" Starscream snapped indignantly. "You won't need 'protections'. I'm perfectly capable of getting someone even as graceless and ugly as you past Red Alert's security."

Megatron shook his helm. It wasn't a matter of who was less likely to be caught, but what the likely consequences would be. Someone like Soundwave catching him in bed with an Autobot wasn't going to be pretty, whatever spiel he managed to put on it, but he'd at least be able to prevent Starscream being executed as a spy, perhaps even keep him out of the brig.

Whatever Starscream boasted, he could not promise the same. Should Optimus Prime discover him attempting to sneaking out Starscream proverbial bathroom window like a thief in the night, he'd be shot on sight.

And Starscream...? Not even as skilled a liar as he could get out of that one.

He finished his cube and stood.

"Think about it." He offered, cupping Starscream's cheek and pressing a rough kiss to the side of his helm. "My berth is silk padded. Wonderful on the wings."

Starscream looked contemplative when he took off, so maybe he'd convince him yet.

Starscream always hit the wash-racks upon his return to the *Ark*. Megatron's scent was distinct and masculine, gun power and oil and musky iron, and as much as Starscream enjoyed burying his nose in Megatron's neck cables and inhaling it, he'd rather not prance about the base reeking of his faction's four million year old nemesis.

That, and he could already feel the evidence of their... *dalliance* threatening to seep through his panel and leak down the inside of his leg.

Knuckles rapped against the doorframe and Starscream turned from the shower to see his oldest friend, Skyfire, in the doorway, smiling sheepishly. Starscream reciprocated with an awkward smile of his own.

"Showering again?"

Starscream turned away so Skyfire couldn't see his expression, shrugging noncommittally and scrubbing at the grey scape of paint spoiling the glossy curve of his cockpit with a little more haste.

"You missed the post battle brief." Skyfire added, propping his huge frame against the doorframe and folding his arms. "Again."

"Prime already spoke to me." Starscream muttered, resentment dripping into his tone. "I've listened to enough criticism for one day."

"He's just looking out for you." Skyfire was always very ready to jump to Prime's defence, and always had been.

Starscream was sure if his only friend hadn't been so blindly loyal to Prime and his cause then both of them might have fled Cybertron when the war broke out, stayed clear of it all. Stuck to science. Lived in peace.

A small part of Starscream was grateful though. War was surprisingly eventful.

"I know," he sighed to reassure Skyfire. "I just wanted some air."

Skyfire nodded understandingly. "Don't worry about it. I covered for you."

Starscream hid his smirk, wondering what Skyfire would say if he knew what he'd *really* been covering for. It was getting dangerous, this little hobby of his, with it's increasing frequency. Back when it had started it had just been the odd... slip, error in judgment, that Megatron at least, had seemed to resent for weeks afterwards. Then days. Then hours.

Starscream forgot to feel ashamed most of the time. He was too busy relishing the excitement of it. Megatron was so... *Powerful*. He could curl a fist around Starscream's throat and squeeze until his optics burst, ending him good and easy. And if he had any tactical sense, he would. If only to seize the air advantage over the Autobots.

But he never did.

"-scream?"

Starscream blinked himself back to the present, wiping the silly little grin from his face.

"What?" He snapped, annoyed at the interruption in his musings.

Skyfire studied him carefully, a frown hardening his usually soft expression. "...Nothing." He said

after a moment, "Just... I'm starting to worry about you. Disappearing during battles. Staying out late. It's not like you."

"Yes it is." Starscream snorted.

"Yeah, when were you a mechling," Skyfire shook his helm. "You know you can always tell me if there's something wrong. We're friends, Starscream."

"Trust me, Skyfire," Starscream flashed him a smile, lying through his denta. "If there as a problem, you'd be the first to know."

Invading and stealing from a dam with such poor security should have been a quick in-out job. Steal what stored energy they could and make off with it before the Autobots caught wind.

But some ridiculous ongoing squabble between Motormaster and Scrapper meant that when the two gestalts combined to form Menasor and Devastator, instead of acting as deterrents to ward off the fleshling authorities as per their plan, the two combiners decided instead to fight *each other*.

Getting between them was suicide, so the best Megatron could really do was shoot over their helms and yell.

Menasor managed to punch Devastator square in the face, causing the huge combiner to stumble back, trip over a wailing police car, and land aft first onto the dam's security hut, crushing it flat. The humans started screaming and shooting their pathetic little guns at them. Neither combiner seemed to notice.

Megatron threw up his arms and left them to it.

Inside the dam they faired no better. Skywarp, after struggling to work the controls for some time had decided to shoot at them to get them working. The only mech with the know-how to repair and work them so they could get any energon out of place was Soundwave, who was currently waylaid, attempting to fish Rumble out of the dam's reservoir after another of the cassettes had pushed him in.

Voice hoarse from yelling, Megatron stomped outside and sulked atop the dam, wishing he had a spare officer that could shout at and wrangle the rest of these idiots and give him a break for once.

By his estimations the Autobots would be arriving in five to ten minutes, and honestly, at this point he hoped Prime just shot him and put him out of his misery.

He tilted his helm up, looking for the silver lining in this disastrous situation that he so desperately needed- when it chose that moment to arrive, bursting through the fluffy white clouds, sun shimmering on his underbelly.

Starscream.

He would have been a welcome sight... if it didn't mean the rest of his ilk weren't far behind.

Megatron watched as Starscream transformed and landed lightly on the other side of the dam, just shy of the tree line. He said nothing, simply meeting Megatron's gaze knowingly and slipping into the woods.

Megatron considered his situation. His attempt at a raid was in shambles, and likely couldn't get any worse. Prime and his Autobots were on their way and he had a duty to remain by his mechs, help them hold the fort.

But he wouldn't have *needed* to fight back Autobots if the blundering idiots hadn't wasted so much time screwing around.

Let them suffer in directionless panic for a moment or two, Megatron decided, steadily making his way across the dam. It was the least they deserved.

"This had better not be an ambush." He warned, brushing aside a branch and revealing Starscream's hiding spot, propped against a tree.

"You say that every time." Starscream sassed him.

Megatron glanced back the way he'd come. The dam was still visible through the trees, which meant they weren't as hidden as he would have liked. He took Starscream's arm and tried to lead him on.

Starscream shook him off. "Prime will arrive any minute," he reproached, like Megatron didn't already know. "What are you still doing here?"

"Waiting for my subordinates to pull themselves together," he snapped, taking some of his frustration out on Starscream. "What do you care?"

"*Why* do I care if you get blasted to pieces?" Starscream snorted sarcastically. "Maybe because I don't want them rifling through your memory files afterwards and learning what we've been doing?!"

Megatron griped his wrist again and shoved him against a tree. The entire thing shook, leaves and twigs rained down from above. Starscream was scowling.

"You seem awfully sure of my demise."

"Well you are pretty predictable." Starscream snarked nastily.

Megatron's grip on his shoulder tightened. He could tell it was uncomfortable for Starscream, but he was too angry to care about a smug little Autobot's feelings. Behind them there was an explosion. The Autobot's had arrived.

Megatron's comm pinged with a message, likely warning him of the fact. He dismissed it and offlined the comm.

"You should probably retreat." Starscream sneered, arching a clever brow.

"I should probably hold you ransom." Megatron threatened- and not for the first time.

Starscream was aware how empty that threat was. His mouth curved playfully. He touched Megatron's chest, digits picking at the purple insignia. "You couldn't capture me if you tried."

"Then what do you call this?" Megatron pressed close, pinning Starscream against the tree with his hips. He felt a thigh twitch against his own. Starscream's optics were suddenly brighter, filled with excitement.

Delicate servos caught his chin and tilted it down. Starscream leant forwards, stretching up on his toe pedes to kiss him lightly, exhaling softly through his nose. Megatron's chest was still hot and tight with frustration, and he released some of it when he kissed back roughly, enticing little huffs of

annoyance from Starscream.

"Don't bite-"

Just to be contrary, Megatron ducked his helm and bit him on the neck, hard. Starscream shouted and hissed, swatting his shoulder. Megatron purred and sucked the crumpled fuel line into his mouth, glossa licking to soothe.

He drew back and cupped Starscream's cheek, letting their noses brush-

"Megatron!"

Prime's bellow sent a shock of panic through Megatron's frame faster than a strike of lightening. Battle protocols triggered in a snap and before his processor could catch up he was shifting his grip from Starscream's cheek to his throat. Starscream choked, his servos flying up to pull him off, claws scratching, optics bright with genuine fear. Megatron could feel the flutter of his fuel pump against his palm, picking up speed rapidly.

Megatron tugged him away from the tree and thrust him out in front of him, using him as a shield between himself and Prime's blaster.

Megatron!" Starscream wheezed, not desperate but furious, his claws carving deep stinging furrows in Megatron's armour.

"Silence." He snarled, needing him to shut up, but having no way to do it gently. He couldn't compromise his farce and he couldn't reassure Starscream of his intentions.

"Let him go, Megatron." Prime ordered, moving between the trees so he was stood just metres away now, blaster at the ready. The safety was off.

"Back off, Prime." Megatron snarled, "Or I'll snap his neck like a twig."

Starscream's optics flared. "You treacherous-!"

Megatron shook him lightly, silently projecting his desperation. *Shut up. Shut up and let me handle this.* He could still get them out of this.

Prime's readiness to rescue his air commander meant it was unlikely he'd seen much, if any, of the canoodling occurring before he had announced his presence and drawn his weapon. Besides, what reason had he to think his loyal subordinate would have willingly walked into their enemy's arms?

"You don't want his energon on your hands, Megatron," Prime continued. "Your Decepticons have been driven back. There's nothing for you here. Don't end his life over nothing."

Starscream was still struggling, and cut in with, "I *trusted* you, you-!"

Megatron slapped a servo over his mouth and tugged him back, pinning him to his chest. Luckily, Prime thought Starscream had been addressing him, and his optics dimmed with regret.

"It'll be alright, Starscream."

"Don't make promises you can't keep, Prime." Megatron snarled, and pinched Starscream so he would wince, making it look like he was being hurt more to play on Prime's soft fondness for his soldiers. "Drop your blaster, or you'll be taking him home in pieces."

There was a long pause, Starscream breathing harshly against his palm, before finally, Prime lifted

his servo in defeat and let his blaster hang from his digit.

"There." He took a step back, "Now let him go."

Megatron couldn't, obviously. Starscream was furious with him and he was outnumbered by the two of them. He kept his grip tight on Starscream and began to drag him back. "You'll have him. In time."

Starscream started to thrash, but Megatron knew releasing him now meant he'd fly off and likely never return to him, and he had, rather unwisely, become accustomed to his company. He needed to clear the air with him, away from prying Autobot audials.

"Megatron!" Prime yelled.

But Megatron was already jumping in to the air, hauling Starscream with him. He opened his comm to call for a full retreat, regroup at base.

Starscream had voiced a reluctance to visit the base before, but perhaps he'd be pleasantly surprised- once he calmed down, of course.

If he calmed down...

Chapter 2

Megatron kept his servo clamped firmly around Starscream's mouth for the entirety of the retreat. His subordinates joined him in the air, most flashing him appreciative looks when they spotted his quarry. More notably his airforce. The lone Autobot seeker was the bane of their existence.

Megatron consciously tightened his grip on his struggling captive. If Starscream broke away and tried to flee, he didn't doubt the hoard of seekers would descend on him with killing intent, regardless of his orders. Their hate for him was well broadcasted.

"Stop this." He hissed when he was sure no one was close enough to overhear, mouth flush to Starscream's audial. "I'm not going to hurt you-"

Starscream struggled to say something against his servo, optics wide with disbelief.

Finally they reached the base, the dark tower rising from the rolling ocean to meet them. Starscream pushed at the arm around his waist when they landed, breaths coming harsh and fast against Megatron's palm, his optics darting around in clear panic as the others landed around them, surrounding him.

Megatron couldn't repress the bizarre urge to comfort and soothe him.

"It's alright," he hissed, slowly peeling his servo away from Starscream's mouth, pleasantly surprised when he didn't start screaming and swearing. He began to relax. "I'll explain in a moment, if you just-"

"You *lying* sack of-!"

In a flash Starscream slipped his grip, twisted on the spot, and slapped him across the face with enough force to indent his faceplate.

Megatron stumbled back, optics rolling in his helm, equilibrium shot. Without a pause for breath Starscream turned around and punched an incoming Motormaster solidly in the face with a sickening crack, then drove his arm back to smash his elbow into Astrotrain's gut.

Shouts rang out, and Decepticons from all directions were landing to pounce and restrain their prisoner. Megatron probed a loose denta with his glossa and spat energon to the side, watching peevishly as the incensed Autobot was restrained by rough servos.

"That enough!" He ordered, when Starscream snarled in pain, someone's rough handling *too* rough.

"The *brig*, Lord Megatron?" Blitzwing asked, sending Starscream a particularly unpleasant look.

Starscream twisted against the mechs holding him, "Don't you dare! Don't *you dare*!"

"No," Megatron glared at Starscream, "Interrogation."

Starscream -unable to read his mind and for completely understandable reasons believing him-started to spit and curse. At least it all made for a convincing show.

Vortex stepped forward, servo raised voluntarily, "I would be honoured to take on the task, my lord. There's little an Autobot had hide from *my* methods."

"That won't be necessary." Megatron said firmly, closing in on Starscream and taking hold of him.

He gestured for the others to release, fairly confident his superior strength could handle him alone. "I'll be dealing with this one *personally*."

Starscream was still trying to stamp on his pedes out on the corridor. Alone now, and long since run out of patience, Megatron came to a halt and yanked him close by the chest plating, snarling inches from his nose. "Try my patience one more time and I really *will* drag you off to interrogation."

Starscream wriggled, nose scrunched distastefully. "If you think for one second I'm going bend over and let you touch me after you *kidnapped* me, you've-!"

"I haven't kidnapped you."

"You tried to choke me!"

"I had to!" Megatron bellowed, then cursed when his voice echoed loudly down the corridor. He looked both ways, then started dragging Starscream along again. "Stop fighting and hurry up."

"Where are you taking me?"

"My quarters."

"I said it wasn't going to frag-"

Megatron whipped around again, hissing, "Will you be quiet for five blasted seconds!"

Starscream's mouth shut with a clack, but his expression was mutinous. Megatron shifted his grip on him, taking his wrist now instead, still tight, but no longer crushing.

"Quickly." He said, more evenly voiced. "Before someone see us."

Starscream's expression didn't improve.

Megatron felt his optic twitch. "*Please*." He snarled through denta.

Starscream's optics narrowed, but he cooperated, eyeing Megatron warily as they continued through the base.

When they reached his quarters he tapped his code in, trying to hide it from Starscream's prying optics. The door opened and he nudged Starscream in first, then made sure to lock the door when they were both inside.

"I need a drink." He breathed wearily, releasing Starscream and leaving him in the middle of the room whilst he went to the desk against the far bulkhead.

Starscream said nothing, too busy considering his surroundings. He appeared to give a little nod of approval when he saw something he liked, like the shelves full of files and rarities, or the plump padding on the berth, and a grimace when he saw something he didn't; such as the rust on the ceiling, or the dirty crates in the corner.

Megatron dug into his desk and pulled out some of the highest grade he had. He needed it.

"I told you I didn't want to come here." Starscream muttered, folding his arms across his chest.

Megatron snorted and drank the energon, all in one. It burned on the way down. "I had to. Prime saw us."

"And you were rather quick to wrap your thuggish servos around my throat, weren't you?" Starscream sneered, edging into the corner of the room, nearest the door, even though he knew it was locked.

Megatron slammed the empty cube down on the desk. "I was protecting you, you little fool!"

"*Prime* wasn't the idiot trying to *throttle* me!"

"No, but he might have if he'd realised what we were doing! Have you no sense?!"

"That still doesn't answer why you used me as a shield and dragged me back here?"

Sometimes there was just no arguing with someone so stubborn and easily offended. Megatron grunted noncommittally, waving a servo. "I wasn't keen on getting shot."

"Fine." Starscream threw his arms up. "You're an idiot, we're agreed. Now let me go."

"How I am supposed to accomplish that?" Megatron stared at him incredulously, "They think you're a prisoner. Your *own faction* thinks you're a prisoner-"

"I'll say I escaped."

"In less than an hour?"

Starscream shrugged, "Is that so hard to believe?"

"I'm sure Prime will negotiate for you." Megatron growled, unwilling to let 'Starscream escaping in less than a hour' happen to his reputation. "You are so *invaluable* to him, after all."

"And what am I supposed to do until then?" Starscream placed his servos on his hips and hiked his wings high. "Locked in this room with you?"

Megatron probably wouldn't have been stupid enough to suggest a frag if he hadn't had such a potent drink- but he had, and he did, and he thoroughly deserved the things Starscream threw at him as a result.

Starscream soon ran out of things to throw and there really wasn't all that much to do confined in Megatron's quarters. He was still angry though, and his neck, although undamaged, felt the phantom grip of Megatron's servo, the strength of his digits against delicate fuel lines. Megatron was powerful, and he'd always known that, but it was different, knowing something and feeling it.

He sat on the end of Megatron's berth, arms folded, glaring at the wall, determined to remain in this position until Megatron grew bored enough to let him escape after all.

"Would you like a drink?" Megatron asked, somewhat awkwardly.

"I'm angry with you."

He heard a sigh, of the long suffering variety. "I never would have guessed. Now are you going to have a drink or have you taken up a fuel strike?"

Starscream huffed, but stuck out a servo without looking at Megatron. After a moment a cube was placed into it, warm, strong digits curled around his servo when he gripped it. His resolve softened.

"If you had let me lead you further from the dam, Prime never would have seen us." Megatron offered his unsolicited opinion.

Starscream's resolve shot right back up again.

"If *you* weren't always so eager to stick your glossa down my throat there wouldn't have been anything *to* see."

Megatron made a noise of pure frustration, jolting the berth when he dropped to it heavily beside him, close enough that their thighs brushed. He was running hot, Starscream could feel the berth padding under him start soaking up the excess heat already.

"Of all the times I've envisioned bringing you down here I never once thought we'd spend our time in private *arguing*."

Starscream huffed, trying not to let on that he'd thought of scenarios rather similar, but in his room back at the *Ark*, with Megatron handcuffed and blindfolded on his berth...

"This is hardly the place for it." He muttered.

"What's wrong with my room?" Megatron sounded defensive.

Starscream looked pointedly at the stained ceiling, then bounced slightly on the berth. It creaked painfully.

Megatron snorted, "And where was this fastidious fussiness when I had you face down, aft up in the mud just last week?"

A classy mech might have blushed. Starscream only smirked. "I wasn't *angry* at you then."

"If it's a matter of shifting your disposition," Megatron began, dropping a kiss to Starscream's shoulder, his servo sliding over his thigh. "I'm sure I can convince you otherwise."

"Oh?" Starscream's smirk widened, shoulder hunching against the kisses Megatron was pressing there. "You think a few kisses will win me over?"

Megatron didn't respond, mouth moving along to his clavicle seam. A big servo cupped his side and began to turn him. Starscream allowed it, twisting to face Megatron so his hot mouth could continue a path down his chest. A glossa teased at the blades of his turbine, lips suckling the centre tip briefly. He sighed, petting absently at Megatron's helmet.

"Lay back," Megatron ordered, and without giving him the chance to comply grabbed his hips and tugged him up the berth, drawing his legs up only to shove them apart.

Starscream could have slapped him off, but the desire to do so left him more and more with every one of Megatron's kisses, pressing to the glass of his cockpit, the red of his hip plating. Starscream leant back so he was propped up on his forearms, watching.

"The Mighty Lord Megatron," he said, drawing circles on the back of Megatron's helm. "Terror of Kaon. This is what you're reduced to? Sucking Autobot spike?"

Megatron's crimson red optics flicked up and caught his gaze. He hummed in the affirmative, and the vibration shot through Starscream's panels to the array underneath. His codpiece folded apart and before his spike could even think about emerging, Megatron's glossa slipped carefully into his sheath.

He moaned, grip tightening on Megatron's helm. His spike thickened and pressurised straight into the wet warmth of Megatron's mouth. He fell from his forearms and let his helm flop back to the berth. Megatron's servos on his thighs kept his hips pinned, so all he could manage were little twitches up into Megatron's eager intake.

Megatron suckled and licked and made obscene slurping noises. Starscream felt his overload approaching in steady pulses of mounting pleasure. Would Megatron let him finish in his mouth? Would he swallow it?

Today wasn't the day he'd be finding out.

He whined resentfully when Megatron pulled off with a wet sniff and cleared his vocaliser. The old warlord wasn't moved by his clear desperation. He wiped spit from his lips and smacked Starscream lightly on the aft. "Valve."

"Charming." Starscream muttered, but let the second panel hiss open.

Megatron ducked his helm again and Starscream lifted his hips up when a glossa spread through the mesh folds. He sighed when it tickled his node and Megatron exhaled heavily across his groin. Lips latched onto the node next and sucked. Starscream seized handfuls of the berth padding, swallowing thickly so he wouldn't cry out like a wanton drone.

"Alright," he said slowly, dumb with lust as he rocked down against Megatron face. "You win. You can frag me..."

Megatron withdrew. His chin was wet with lubricant and his denta sharp and sparkling when he smiled. "I thought that might change your mind."

Starscream rolled his optics and was only vaguely cooperative when Megatron again manoeuvred him, rolling him onto his front. The berth shifted when Megatron crawled over him, straddling him so huge thighs knelt either side of his hips. He shuddered when a wing was gripped and massaged, knowing what was coming.

"You like it from behind." Megatron commented, and Starscream could hear the hiss and click of his array emerging. "You can forget who is doing this to you."

Starscream refrained from admitting that it was true he liked it like this, being ridden and driven into like an animal, but also denying that he actually rather *liked* that it was Megatron doing it. He certainly didn't want to imagine anyone else.

He heard the drag of a fist working across protometal, then a servo gripped his aft, pulled it apart so he could feel the chill of air on his exposed valve. He pressed his face into the berth padding, breathing deep and steady. Hot stiff metal nudged past his folds, then Megatron was slipping inside, sighing softly.

When his hips pressed flush to Starscream's upturned aft and his full length was inside, Starscream twitched at the burning fullness, wanting friction to sooth the sensor nodes buzzing in anticipation.

"Please," he whined.

Megatron curved over him, his mouth breathing hot air against the back of his neck, "Now there's a good Autobot," he praised, drawing his hips back to hitch them forwards. "One that knows how to beg."

Starscream's brow creased with a frown, "Shut up and frag me, stupid old maniac."

Megatron laughed, low and genuine. He pressed a kiss to his neck again.

"Gladly."

Starscream didn't have to worry about being quiet. Most of the Decepticons were going to assume he was being tortured anyway. They probably wouldn't be able to tell the difference...

If there was a sight more beautiful than a freshly fragged seeker, Megatron didn't care to know about it.

Starscream was diagonal across the berth, his legs pressed tightly together to hide the stains of fluids marring the insides of his thighs. He had an arm thrown over his optics dramatically. Megatron gave him a few minutes before he leant over to give him a poke, checking he was still conscious.

Starscream groaned, "Haven't you bothered me enough?"

Megatron didn't bother arguing. He collected the cube he'd tried to give Starscream earlier and placed it beside the berth. "I'm going to speak with your elated leader." He said. "See what I can squeeze him for in exchange for your safe return."

"Don't barter," Starscream muttered from beneath his arm. "Just agree to whatever he wants."

"There's a war going on, you realise?"

"We're on *opposite sides*, you realise?" Starscream mocked, finally sitting up to glare at him. His optics were dim with energy loss, dark face drawn.

"Drink the energon." Megatron told him, rising from the berth and heading for the door. "This shouldn't take long."

He heard Starscream mutter, "It better not," just as the door resealed.

Starscream listened to the door click and lock. He scowled to himself.

'Protecting him' his aft, he thought resentfully. Keeping him locked up in his quarters like a glorified berth warmer was a far more accurate description of the current situation. Things had fallen too far into Megatron's favour for any of this to have been a spur of the moment decision.

He should trash the room. Remind Megatron that they were enemies and prisoners didn't sit around waiting like good little Autobots for their jailers to bestow basic rights on them.

He rolled on the berth and caught a whiff of the padding beneath his nose. Warm iron; Megatron. He inhaled in deep appreciation, letting his nose press a little more firmly into the fabric. Primus, he liked that smell.

He seized the moment of weakness for what it was and stole one of the berth pillows, stuffing it into his subspace as something he could take back with him for lonely nights. His berth was cold and sterile without company, and sometimes replaying memory files just didn't cut it.

Reigning himself back in, he rose, peering around the surprisingly spartan quarters now that he was able to do so, distraction free. The keypad for the door looked outdated and simple, and he could probably cross a few wires and break himself out. Of course, there was still an entire base full of Decepticons between him and the exit, and he was... well.

He gave himself an inquisitive sniff and grimaced. His frame reeked of Megatron and 'facing, the thickened fluids still staining the inside of his thighs. Any Decepticon he wandered across would assume he was fair game.

Grumbling to himself he rolled off the berth and crossed the room, riffling through drawers and boxes. Megatron had datafiles and weapons and stupid looking alien trophies but no cleaning supplies? Not even a cloth? A rag?!

Starscream would have to make a point of gifting him some. Some nice polish too.

If he ever got out of here, of course.

He sat himself at Megatron's desk and kicked his thrusters up, looking between all the unguarded information the stupid old Decepticon had left him with.

Well, he thought, carefully poking one online. It wasn't going to hurt his performance if the next time he met the Decepticon airforce in battle he knew all their manoeuvres, was it?

Whatever Prime's opinion of him had been before, the current situation seemed to have sunk it to an all time low.

"One hundred cubes." Prime's crystal blue optics stared right through to Megatron's spark, icy with judgement. *"Tonight. In one hour and not a minute more."*

Megatron struggled to hide his disappointment. Part of him had been looking forward to waking up to company- even if his current company was likely to stab him in the night. It might still have been worth it too.

"So eager to have him back Prime?" He mocked instead. "I always knew you played favourites."

"Favouritism has little to do with it." Prime sounded angry behind that mask. He sounded 'You-Killed-Fifty-Humans-Angry', even. A rare level of anger indeed. *"Starscream is a high ranking officer whom you deliberately sought to ambush, to harm."*

It was hard to keep a straight face, knowing Starscream had been the guilty party, luring *him* into the woods outside the dam with his patented come-hither glances and promises of pleasure.

Prime was staring at him as though he knew there was something more to this though -more than war tactics and kidnapping- so Megatron couldn't afford to give anything away.

"There's no need to fuss, Prime. He'll be in one piece."

The implication that he could have anything but didn't relax Prime as he'd hope it would.

"*One hour*," he rumbled, voice vibrating the speaker of the communication console. "*Or we'll retrieve him via other means.*"

He hung up with typical Primely dramatics. Megatron tutted at the blank screen, wondering, not for the first time, if perhaps he had a little competition when it came to Starscream's favour. He didn't think Prime was Starscream's type, righteous and good didn't seem to appeal much to the deranged little Autobot. But then, Starscream was a mech of mystery.

He headed back to his quarters. -absently wondering if he'd find all of his most treasured possessions on fire- when he passed by a trine of generic seekers, ducking their helms as they scurried by. He wasn't quite out of audial range when he heard their fretful twittering-

"-took him to his quarters, *if you get what I mean.*" One of them was saying.

"I know. From the way I heard he was crying, I don't think we'll have to worry about old Screamer blasting us out of the sky anytime soon."

Megatron stuttered to a stop, optics flaring with a burst of anger. He had to abort an instinctive spin to stalk them down and slag some sense into them; because of course he hadn't. Never would. Even to an Autobot. That such a thing was not condoned.

But they knew Starscream was in his quarters, being interrogated. He could hardly correct their assumptions about the noises Starscream's over active vocaliser had been making. He didn't want them to think such a deplorable thing, but... Perhaps it was best that they did.

Next time he'd make sure to gag the stupid brat.

His armour was still crawling upon his return to his room, and he was in a far worse mood as a result. Nothing was on fire, but Starscream was at his desk, his dark face far too innocent for someone who had been supposedly behaving themselves.

"Prime wants you back tonight."

Starscream blinked. Megatron could have sworn a look of regret passed over his face at the news. He stood from the desk, but kept behind it, stance a little awkward. Megatron quickly realised why and dug through his subspace, pulling out a cleaning rag.

He tossed it to him.

"Clean yourself up. Prime's opinion of me is low enough."

Starscream caught the rag easily, rolling it between his digits to test it's quality before turning his back on Megatron and doing the best he could with what he'd been given.

"What's wrong?" He asked over his shoulder. "Prime not give you what you asked for?"

"A hundred cubes." Megatron grunted.

Starscream's wings lifted in clear interest. He hummed, "I told you not to barter."

"I didn't." Megatron dropped to the end of his berth, looking in the opposite direction as he waited for Starscream to finish. "That was his first offer."

Starscream didn't respond for a while.

"I suppose *I am* rather important," he said rather smugly.

He finished and tossed the soiled rag to Megatron's desk. He then crossed the room to strike a pose next to him, hip cocked and arms folded. "So what are you sulking for? I'm the one that was just traded like a sack of spare parts."

Megatron peered up at him, spark aching. Part of him wondered if it would be worth keeping him just a few hours longer. Let Prime storm the base.

No, he was being foolish. He would have Starscream again soon enough. He could be patient, for now.

"Nothing." He cleared his vocaliser, standing. "I've had enough of you for one night anyway."

Starscream pouted. Megatron smirked and dug into his subspace for a pair of cuffs, and was surprised when they were angrily slapped out of his grip. He snarled.

Starscream stuck a pointed digit in his face. "You're not cuffing me!"

Megatron bent to snatch them up again, movements sharp with frustration. "You're a prisoner."

"A *pretend*-prisoner."

"A prisoner nonetheless." Megatron shook the cuffs at him. "Hold out your wrists."

Starscream stuck his arms behind his back like a disobedient sparkling. "No!"

"Do not test me," He was moments away from wrestling them onto the little fool. "You can't honestly expect any sane Decepticon to accept you wandering through their base unrestrained?"

Starscream's bottom lip was sticking out further and further from his face with every word he said. He knew Megatron was right, he was just too stubborn to cooperate yet. "On one condition."

"There are no conditions!" Megatron bellowed, thrusting the cuffs out. "Put them on!"

"One condition!" Starscream yelled back just as loudly, stamping a pede. "You owe me this."

"I don't owe-"

"If you ever want to see me again outside of the battlefield, you'll do this."

"Fine." Megatron exhaled slowly through his olfactory. "What?"

Starscream's blue optics softened. He stepped forward and reached for Megatron, servos soft and warm. Megatron felt his own frustration melting away just by looking into his dark handsome face. It was like witchcraft, in a way, how easily this seeker manipulated him.

"I want you to come and visit me."

Megatron's optics shuttered in resignation, "You know that's a bad idea."

"It's not-"

"Starscream," Megatron took his servo and squeezed it. "If they caught us, we'd both be in front of a firing squad."

Starscream snorted. "We won't be caught."

It wasn't really a promise Starscream could make. They tempted fate enough as it was, touching one another out in the open, so close to their enemies and allies. How much longer could they get away with it? How much longer would it be worth it? They were gambling with their very lives.

"I came here." Starscream pointed out, seemingly forgetting that he hadn't come at all, but rather been dragged kicking and screaming.

Megatron sighed loudly, lifting Starscream's servo to his lips to kiss the palm. He opened the cuff and clicked the cool metal shut around Starscream's slender wrist.

"We'll see."

It was good enough. Starscream rose onto his toe pedes and kissed him. Megatron held him and kissed back, wondering when he'd gotten so soft for this fickle little Autobot.

Chapter 3

Starscream wasn't particularly rich with friends even among his own faction, so the abundance of fussing comrades that greeted him upon his return to the *Ark* came as a bit of an unwanted surprise. Skyfire's optics were as white as his armour, and the Aerialbots seemed incapable of doing anything but asking if he was alright, no matter how many times he said "yes," or "frag off, I'm fine."

Upon reclaiming him, Optimus had grasped his shoulder firmly, and whether he intended for it to be a comforting gesture for Starscream's sake or his own, it felt restrictive and uncomfortable. Starscream folded his wings close to his back, self-conscious and unable to escape the thought that they could smell *it* on him, see it, like Megatron's servos had somehow left telling imprints on his armour.

He was herded towards the medbay. Ratchet -whom he frequently argued with- was tense with apparent worry. Starscream cringed when he was shunted into the examination room like some sort of emergency cause. Ratchet grumbled under his breath as he readied equipment.

"Can this not wait?" Starscream hissed, trying to shrug off Optimus's grip without actually slapping him away.

"No." Ratchet snapped.

Starscream looked to Optimus -the sane level-headed individual present- but the Prime was shying away, servos up. "As CMO Ratchet has the final say in these matters and I-

"-aren't even supposed to be in here." Ratchet finished for him, waving a spanner at him and the unwanted entourage rather threateningly. "Go on, shoo! The lot of you. We're not putting on a damn show for you."

His well-wishers folded under Ratchet's hard gaze and began to filter back out into the corridor, but Starscream's attempts at sneaking out amongst them were thwarted.

"Not you, stupid!"

"I'm tired and filthy from that disgusting hovel they call a base!" Starscream argued, dodging the medics servos grasping for him. "Let me clean up-

"I don't need to catch you to sedate you." Ratchet threatened, opening a drawer and pulling out a sedative, and a gun. "Get on the examination table-"

"I'm not bugged!" Starscream cried, rushing to the second exit to fight with the lock release. "I wasn't even interrogated-"

"Then what's the harm in getting a checkup?" Ratchet loaded the sedative into the gun.

The *harm* in getting a checkup was that anyone with even a amateurs understanding of frame function would be able to tell his systems were still cooling down from a recent interface. And he could hardly wave off Ratchet's concerns with reassurances that oh no, don't worry, the 'facing that occurred during his kidnapping had all been very *consensual*.

Ratchet flicked the safety off the gun and held it aloft, his helm tilted in an indication that he was willing to listen to one last excuse. Just one.

Starscream deflated, stomping towards the examination table. "Fine."

"You're a smart kid, Starscream." Ratchet set the gun to the side, but didn't put it away. "I knew you'd come to your senses."

"Nothing happened." Starscream said again, fighting back the feeling of vulnerability that came with having to recline flat for examination, like a specimen in a lab- the sort he was always poking.

"Don't care." Ratchet appeared upside-down above him, mouth set into a grim firm line. "Prowl's doing the debrief next. I'm just making sure you haven't brought something nasty back with you."

"I was only gone a few hours." Starscream's servos curled into fists. "What do you imagine I was doing down there?"

"You?" Ratchet snorted, waving a scanner absently. "Primus only knows..."

The banter came to a stop when Ratchet finally began doing his actual job. Starscream kept himself tense and scowling through the whole thing. Ratchet made the occasional noise of satisfaction, or consideration. Starscream knew nervously pestering him about what he was finding would only make the medic look at him all the closer.

Ratchet checked his software, arched a brow at the results, but said nothing. He went on to check his spark, took a sample of his energon, and flashed a light in Starscream's optics that was so bright it made him wince and blink back tears.

"No foreign devices detected." Ratchet seemed to be reassuring him. "And you're virus free."

"I *told* you I was fine." Starscream hissed, placing his servos on the table to push himself up.

Ratchet's servo on his shoulder stopped him. "You're running a little hot though," he continued, his optics hard and serious, but not angry. "There anything else you wanna tell me?"

Starscream swallowed. "...No."

Ratchet exhaled slowly, optics flicking between him and the readout. "You've interfaced lately?"

Starscream knew better than to say anything. He waited, needing to know what Ratchet knew as fact before he started inventing fiction.

Realising he wasn't about to supply anymore information, Ratchet rolled his optics, muttered something about 'stupid mechlins' and continued. "In the last twelve hours? Possibly sooner-"

"Before." Starscream interrupted quickly. "Before the alert sounded I was with... with Skyfire."

Ratchet's brows shot up high. The medic was friends with Skyfire, so presumably he was surprised at this new information, and that Skyfire, who was so *un-secretive*, would keep it from him. "You and Skyfire?"

"It's not any of your business." Starscream snarled, and just in case Ratchet was tempted to go asking Skyfire about any of this, added. "Or anyone else's. Doctor-patient confidentially and all that."

Ratchet's jaw worked in annoyance, or suspicion, Starscream couldn't tell, but it would have to do for now.

"Alright." Ratchet stepped back and set down his tools. "You're clean then. You can go."

Starscream sat up. It had been a long day and he was aching for his berth-

"Prowl's waiting for you in conference six." Ratchet finished, looking a little smug.

Starscream repressed a sigh. Prowl was diligent and thorough and difficult to lie to. He would want to know *why* he'd strayed so far from his orders. *Why* he'd engaged Megatron alone. *Why* he hadn't comm'd for help.

Starscream wondered if shrugging and just pretending to be stupid would be enough to get him out of it.

Either way, this was going to be one long night and he was beginning to resent not having just stayed on the *Nemesis* and slept nestled in the warmth of Megatron's arms.

Two hours and a hundred or so lies later, Starscream was finally allowed to trudge back to his quarters. His berth was an unmade mess, the covers crumpled and slipping to the floor. It wasn't as inviting as Megatron's had been- with its padding and its pillows... even if it did creak.

An abundance of pillows was the luxury of being a selfish Decepticon, he supposed. And maybe rank had something to do with it too.

If Megatron did keep his promise and agreed to come back with him one night he was going to have to clean this place up. There were empty cubes on the floor and half finished experiments covering every work station. Deadly chemicals glowered in test tubes and vials on narrow shelves, just waiting for someone less elegant than he to knock them over.

Someone like Megatron.

A job for another day, thought Starscream dropping to his berth and sighing into the cool covers.

His optics lit up when he remembered his pilfered prize though. He slipped a servo into his subspace and removed Megatron's pillow. It was fat with stuffing and bright purple, like the berth it had belonged to had been. It stuck out like a sore wing atop Starscream's red insulation sheets, but he was willing to overlook the clash of colours.

He held it in his arms and pushed his nose into it. It was almost like having him here already.

Almost.

And speak of the devil-

His comm pinged with an encrypted frequency. With a sleepy smile he answered it.

"Miss me already?"

There was an unhappy grunt. "*Did you steal my pillow?*"

Starscream glanced at it, squeezing it tighter. "...No."

A long sigh crackled the speakers. "*Fine. You can keep it. How did you fair upon your return?*"

Starscream considered listing every unpleasant thing he had just been through in the past few hours as a result of Megatron's stupid blunder. Before deciding that would be a waste of the few moments conversation he could get out of the stubborn warlord.

Complaining at him was detrimental anyway- he never listened.

"It was fine." He said gently, wondering why he was reassuring Megatron, "They don't suspect anything."

"Good. I will see you again soon."

"Oh?" Starscream teased. "Why, what do you have planned? Another dam? Or a nuclear plant this time?"

"If you're open to sharing military secrets, you first." Megatron growled.

Starscream felt a thrill rush through him at the genuine annoyance he heard in Megatron's tone.

"Neither mind. You can tell me all about it when you come visit."

There was silence on the other end of the line, the evidence of Megatron's reluctance. Starscream's spark thudded. He hoped he didn't back out.

"Just imagine," he spoke into the silence, "Everyone will be recharging. Prime's office will be unlocked?"

Megatron hummed.

Starscream dropped his voice to a whisper, "And I'll let you do awful, *unspeakable* things to me in that office..."

"We'll discuss this another time." Megatron finally spoke, and he sounded a little strained. Starscream smiled to himself. *"Get some rest, it's late."*

"You're still up."

"I wanted to check on you before-" he cut off with an angry noise. *"I wanted to ensure our secrets were still secret."*

Starscream's grip tightened on his stolen pillow. "Goodnight then."

"Goodnight."

The comm didn't immediately click off. Starscream waited a moment, then heard a soft breath over the line. It clicked off.

Starscream rolled onto his back, pillow against his chest, and sighed dreamily at the ceiling.

Megatron was finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate on his own faction- even on the rare days free of Autobot meddling. His digit hovered over the 'send' button on his datapad for the brief it had just taken him the entire morning to write. Starscream plagued his thoughts; his smile, the glint in his optics, his greasy devious laugh...

He shook his helm and tapped 'send', but before he could toss the datapad away and rise, it pinged with an incoming message. Thoughts of stomping down to the training room and beating the scrap out of the jittery old sparing drones left Megatron's processor when he saw that the sender was hidden.

He glanced around the command centre but everyone seemed busy at their stations, or at least zoned out enough not to be paying attention to him.

He angled it up in case anyone was nosy enough to peer at the screen, and opened the message.

It was an image file with a caption that read, "*Since I'm so deprived of your attentions, your pillow had to do.*"

On no. The chances of that image file containing anything appropriate for general audiences were dwindling quickly. Despite all sensible logic, Megatron opened it anyway.

It wasn't as bad as he'd feared actually. The image was of a berth with red covers and in its middle, his stolen pillow. Then he looked closer, and saw the patch of darkened purple fabric, obvious dampness.

Megatron shuttered his optics and hid the image against his chest, pinching the bridge of his nose to futilely ward off the rush of warmth flowing through his frame and trying to gather between his hips. The depravity of this Autobot knew no bounds.

He deleted the image, ignoring the surge of pressure behind his panel at the thought of Starscream dry humping it like a desperate untapped mechling.

You're incorrigible, he messaged back, sure that Starscream would pick up on his hidden fondness despite the reproachful undertone.

A moment passed, then another message came through.

No, I'm wet.

Dear Primus, was he really 'sexting' in the middle of a duty shift via an open frequency!? Megatron checked the command centre again, but no one seemed to have taken any notice of his increased fidgeting. He crossed his legs, sitting up straighter to project an air of professionalism despite the throbbing pressure beneath his codpiece.

Are you hard? Came the next inquisitive message.

Megatron considered lying. *Beneath my panel.*

I'm sure that hurts. Would you like me to kiss it better?

In the middle of the duty shift? He wrote back, already running through excuses he could use to leave the base now. *Won't that be suspicious?*

I'm out for a flight. After my 'ordeal' I said I needed some personal time to reflect, and Prime was all too happy to oblige me... so long as I'm back soon.

Megatron stood up, hastily typing, *Usual place?*

I'm already there.

"Soundwave." Megatron barked, slipping the datapad into his subspace. "I'm going out."

What did he need an explanation for anyway? He was in charge.

He heard Megatron land loudly and gracelessly, and Starscream was across their tiny island and upon him in seconds.

"Starscream," Megatron breathed raggedly, like he'd run here on foot. He reached for his face but Starscream didn't want to waste time kissing. He seized Megatron by the hips and shoved him against a tree. The wood groaned and bent under the warlord's great mass, but didn't break.

Starscream dropped to his knees, scuffing his knee-plating on rocks and sticks and not caring in the slightest. He put his mouth on Megatron, opening wide so the flat of his glossa could push against the prominent bulk of Megatron's codpiece. Digits dragged across his helm and then the codpiece under his glossa was splitting apart, Megatron's silver spike emerging from it's sheath with a hiss.

Starscream nuzzled it, kissed it indulgently, letting the wet tip smear trails of pre-fluid across his face until the spike was long and thick and heavy. He opened his mouth and used his glossa to guide the shaft into his mouth, moaning at the weight of it as he suckled lightly.

Megatron began to stroke the back of his helm. He was patient and still, but his spike was pulsing in Starscream's mouth, twitching with pent up charge. Starscream's valve fluttered at the thought of swallowing it's fluids, of it's warm sweetness sitting in his tanks...

He drew back slowly, flicking his glossa over the tip to steal a taste of Megatron before letting the spike drop from his mouth. It bobbed under it's own weight, glistening with his spit and beading with Megatron's fluids.

The servo on Starscream's helm shifted to cup his chin and draw him back in. Megatron pushed his thumb into his mouth and opened his jaw wide. Starscream relaxed and let Megatron guide his spike back into his intake. He let it sink deep, aborting his gag reflex when it slipped into the tubing of his throat.

He gargled, cheeks hot and vents struggling to work around the obstruction. Megatron hummed his approval, staring down at him with dark lustful optics. The servo on the back of his helm pushed him forward, forcing the spike deeper till Starscream's optics watered and his nose was pressed flush to Megatron's groin.

Megatron held there for a moment, savouring it, before pulling him back and starting to thrust into his mouth.

Optics streaming with coolant, Starscream kept his gaze still, watching Megatron's brow crease with concentration, his jaw tick. Starscream listened to the slick meld of spike and throat, felt drool track down his chin from where he was unable to swallow.

Megatron grunted, shoving deep and grinding against Starscream's face, chafing his nose against his plating. Starscream felt the spike in his mouth jump with it's release, emptying itself down his throat so he had no choice but to swallow. He did clumsily, until Megatron pulled back and finished the last of his climax all over Starscream's glossa. He moaned at the taste and suckled, glossa massaging over the tip of Megatron's spike to coax every drop he could out of it.

But Megatron was finished and hissed, too sensitive for further stimulation.

Starscream relented, sitting back on his heels and wiping at the mess on his chin, touching swollen lips.

A servo was on his wing before long, giving it a tug. Starscream winced when the joints pulled and got to his pedes clumsily, shoving at Megatron's chest reproachfully.

"Those aren't hand holds-!"

An arm about his waist pulled his flush to Megatron warm frame and he was kissed, a glossa slipping wetly into his mouth. Megatron didn't seem to mind the taste of his own seed, must have liked it even. He purred happily, huge chest rumbling with the vibrations of his sated engine.

Starscream melted a little. Still light headed from lack of oxygen.

"The rumours are true." Megatron observed, red optics smug and bright, "You do have a clever mouth."

Starscream snorted but his own smart response was lost to another kiss. He could feel the irritating curl of Megatron's smile against his lips.

Starscream stayed considerably longer than he should have.

Megatron was in rare form today, perhaps because of the teasing messages Starscream had sent him that afternoon? Or maybe because he'd just learnt how much Megatron seemed to like him on his knees -with a spike in his mouth or taking it from behind like a beast- and was exploiting it to the best of his abilities.

His struts felt like softened plastic by the time Megatron stilled, mouth on his wing and spike buried deep. He felt as much as heard the hum of Megatron's vocaliser as the large mech's climax rolled through him. Starscream let his optics flutter shut. It was almost enough to forget he was face down on the dirty ground, the paint on his knees and servos worn down to it's primer.

And it was getting dark.

Megatron's servos came away from his waist and without his support Starscream's weakened backend dropped to the ground with a thunk. Beside him Megatron crashed to the mud with an even louder clatter. Starscream turned his helm to consider his state. The old mech's chest was heaving, his optics dim.

He'd really put him through the paces.

Starscream was beginning to think he'd fallen asleep, out here in the open, lying on the ground, when after a moment Megatron shifted. He reached under himself, searching blindly, before yanking out what looked like half a tree rather than a twig. Megatron flicked it away irritably.

"We can't keep doing this..." He muttered.

"My joints can't take much more either." Starscream agreed, stretching out a leg awkwardly. The joins around his groin had gone... *Funny*. Megatron's fault, undoubtedly.

"This is precisely why you should swallow your pride and come to the *Ark* with me." He continued.

Megatron sighed deeply, looking up at the sky instead of at him. "That wasn't exactly what I meant."

Starscream lifted his helm, throat tight with a sudden worry. He wasn't stupid. He knew the tone of an approaching '*we need to talk*' conversation. Worse still, he knew the regretful expression Megatron was wearing.

"Don't even think about it." He began slowly. Megatron glanced towards him, face tight. Starscream pushed himself upright, wanting to loom over him. "Don't you *dare* try and break this off-"

"That *isn't* what I was suggesting." Megatron sat up too, looking annoyed and defensive. He pointed, "But we can't continue like this-"

"This is fine!" Starscream gestured between them, talking fast, a little giddy with panic, "What's wrong with continuing like this?!"

"This arrangement might have been acceptable in the beginning, when we were meeting once every week or so, but now-"

"We still only meet once a week!" Starscream argued, and they did -if they discounted the time's they ran into each other accidentally-on-purpose during raids, and those 'special occasions' they had that weren't even really about fragging but just always seemed to dissolve into that anyway because they couldn't seem to keep their hands off one another...

Megatron was looking at him like he was nuts. "We've been making excuses to gravitate back to one another every day."

Starscream snorted, "Maybe lately but-"

"Every day for the past *three weeks*." Megatron growled, pointing at him again, almost condemning. "And that's not even counting how often we communicate via commlink and -"

"Alright," Starscream was willing to fold over the frequency of their meetings, regardless of whether it was a fluke or their new normal. "So we like 'facing'? How is that a bad thing? Why does that have to change?"

"Is this still about interfacing for you?" Megatron asked seriously, arching a brow.

Starscream suddenly felt supremely uncomfortable. And vulnerable. He drew his legs up to his chest, shying away from the intensity of Megatron's gaze as he muttered a rather pathetic, "Well what else would it be about...?"

Megatron didn't answer that question.

Starscream jumped when his servo was suddenly taken and squeezed fiercely, his digits locked tight in Megatron's powerful ones. He looked up, and the mech he could never quite take seriously as his enemy had the most sincere, profound look in his optics.

Starscream didn't like it one bit.

Once a notable silence had passed, Megatron squeezed again. "Starscream, you would make a fine Decepticon-"

Starscream yanked his servo free with a panicked noise, "You're trying to recruit me?!"

"I'm *trying* to protect you."

"That's what you said the other night." Starscream slapped off his attempts at retaking his servo and stood just so he could stamp his pede in angry defiance. "And your 'protection' caused me nothing but grief then. I don't need your half-aft'd concern, or your ugly insignia-"

"There's nothing 'half-aft'd' about it." Megatron's mouth curled angrily. "This isn't a conversation you can throw dramatics at to avoid. We need to make a decision about whether this is worth your life-"

"It won't cost my life!"

"It *will if they catch you!*" Megatron suddenly bellowed, and as his deep voice reverberated across the lake it struck Starscream how quiet it was out here. The wind through the leaves, and insects in the undergrowth, but nothing else. Just them.

And Megatron's chest heaving, fists clenched in fury.

Starscream was surprised enough by the outburst that he lapsed into silence.

Briefly.

"...They won't kill me."

"Execution is the standard penalty for treachery." Megatron contradicted.

"I haven't betrayed them. Technically." Starscream said, kicking at the mud dejectedly, though he knew it was a weak argument. He was quite literally sleeping with the enemy.

"Why do *I* have to change?" He asked, eyeing Megatron resentfully. "*You* could become an Autobot. Maybe you could give living above the surface a try? The clean air might restore a little of your sanity."

Megatron huffed, sounding calmer now despite his teasing, but still tense. "You know why that's not possible."

Starscream did. He briefly pictured Megatron blindfolded and cuffed in front of a firing squad, waiting to be executed for his war crimes. His spark clenched miserably at the thought.

"You could call a truce?"

Unsurprisingly Megatron started laughing, loud and humourlessly, "I like you Starscream, but not that much."

Something about that easy admittance, that casual, back-handed 'I like you' soothed a little bit of the turmoiling emotion within Starscream. Just a little.

"This isn't a decision you need to make immediately, but soon. Assess your loyalties, and your ambitions, and what they mean to you." Megatron continued, closing in and laying a servo on his shoulder. When Starscream didn't look up, that servo shifted to his chin instead, tilting it up so he was looking into Megatron's weary old face, framed by that stupid bucket helmet.

"I would feel terrible should something untoward happen to you because of our... because of us."

"And yet you let your subordinates shoot at me nearly every day?" Starscream lightened the mood a little, smiling.

Megatron smirked back. "That is of little consequence. None of those morons can shoot for slag."

He had a point there.

Starscream let him kiss him, calculated and slow this time, his frame thrilling at the surge of emotion it awoke in him.

Megatron was wrong. He didn't need to assess how much this all meant to him- he already knew it was worth his life.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

One day late but here it is!

For obvious reasons, Starscream didn't recharge well that night. He considering calling Megatron's frequency just to continue their argument, maybe say some things over the comm that he hadn't been brave enough to say in person.

Like who did Megatron think he was anyway? Giving him an ultimatum like that? Join my faction or we're through. If it even was an ultimatum. He hadn't been clear, and Starscream hadn't really been listening properly.

His spark felt heavy, just waiting to drop out of the bottom of it's chamber and leave him empty and cold. The impending sense of dread wouldn't leave him either. He thought of leaving his friends and comforts here on the *Ark*, and then thought of only ever seeing Megatron across a battlefield, a gaze that usually softened for him now hard and hateful- and he felt sick, so sick he couldn't lie in berth a second longer.

He wasn't the only one awake. He passed by the rec room and heard music and laughter and smelt the overpowering zing of high grade. Mischief that would have otherwise been sniffed out by Prowl during the day shift was now in full swing. He was tempted to join them; maybe get drunk and start a fight with Sunstreaker.

But the thought of sulking alone was so much more appealing.

He headed for the main entrance, seeking the comfort of fellow stars, when he walked head first into an invisible something. A something that made a noise of surprise.

"*Mirage*, you creep," he snarled, waving his arms in front of him to try and catch the spy. "Why are you invisible in the dark?! Are you trying to break someone's neck?"

"Sorry, Starscream," *Mirage* spoke softly from somewhere left of where he was groping, and with a ripple of light, began to reappear. "Jazz asked me to keep an optic on the gathering, for the sake of Prowl's oil pressure."

He nodded down the corridor towards the rec, just as something crashed and someone screamed and yelped "*Sorry! Sorry!*"

"Weren't you invited?" Starscream sneered.

Mirage only smiled, "Guess I'm not popular enough anymore..."

Ah yes. Who would want to be friends with a spy after all. Willingly getting so close to the enemy? There had to be ulterior untrustworthy motives.

Starscream considered the reckoning *he'd* be in for if Megatron's fears for him came to pass. He'd be *lucky* to be as popular as *Mirage*.

"Haven't seem much of you lately." Mirage tilted his helm, elegant high-caste features creased with concern. "Skyfire said something's been bothering you. If you want to talk about it, I'm-"

Starscream cut him off with a snort. "Of course, I'll spill all to the *spy*."

Mirage looked dejected, but used to his attitude. He shrugged. "Spies make pretty good secret keepers too."

"Depends on what side you're on." Starscream muttered, looking away from the quizzical expression on Mirage's face as he passed him.

"Starscream, what-?"

"Never mind!" He threw over his shoulder. "Go back to spying on the mechlings..."

Mirage didn't follow him. Good. Starscream knew for a fact there were at least three buckets of iced energon sitting in the mess hall freezer, more than enough to drown his sorrows in, but not nearly enough to share.

A distress call came in from a gas fired power plant and absolutely no one was at all surprised to hear they were being attacked by Decepticons. Starscream thought it was ironic that Megatron had chosen a *gas* fired station though, as he was so full of hot air himself.

He also wondered at the suddenness of this second attempt at a raid, and how much it might have had to do with their sort-of-argument the previous day.

If Megatron wanted to talk to him again, maybe he should just *talk to him*, like a civilised mech, instead of resorting to theft and terrorism to get his attention like a socially inept lunatic. Starscream was tempted to feign sickness, maybe play up a little post trauma stress to get out of going just to spite Megatron. But even as Prime was gave his pre-battle brief -about now bold and desperate and therefore dangerous the Decepticons were getting- Starscream could feel his leader's suspicious gaze linger on him.

Best to not draw any more attention to himself for a while.

"What's the plan, commander?" Silverbolt asked nervously as their ground-confined comrades 'transformed and rolled out'. His brothers lined up behind him, all of them bouncing with eagerness for the fight ahead.

Overexcited little fools.

Starscream waved at them dismissively, "You go ahead. Stick to the standard manoeuvres-"

Slingshot tutted loudly, "What a surprise."

Starscream's denta ground together. He was stressed enough already. The last thing he needed was the sass of an insubordinate mechling. "Something to say, little one?"

Slingshot's face tightened at the jab at his size, but Sliverbolt was cutting in again, saving his loud-mouthed brother from landing himself in trouble. "We've just concerned, commander. That's all. Prowl called us into his office the other cycle."

Starscream's spark skipped a pulse. He glanced behind him at the dissipating cloud of dust where the others had sped off. "Did he now?"

"Wanted to know where you'd been sneaking off to." Slingshot threw in. "Looks like he doesn't trust you."

"Prowl doesn't trust anyone." Starscream reminded him. "It's what makes him good at his job. Now, *you*-!"

He pointed to Skydive, who jumped and stood at attention. "Yeah -I mean, yes sir?"

"Keep them in line until I rejoin you."

Skydive shuffled his pedes, pointing to his brother, "But Sliver's the-"

"You're the smartest." Starscream reminded him, and levelled the rest with a glare. "Do as I say or it won't be the *Decepticons* you have to worry about up there."

He took off, leaving the gestalt to catch up. They were fast, for flying cars, but it wasn't enough to keep up with him. He flew over the speeding Autobots breezily, briefly wondering what a pain it must be for them all to be so slow.

Shortly after he received a warning from Optimus; *pull back and wait for reinforcements*.

Starscream snorted and dismissed it, knowing it was only because of what had happened last time. Idiot Megatron making a fool of him, turning him into his faction's resident distressed damsel.

That's an order, Starscream.

Starscream dismissed it again and pushed onwards. He hadn't made it this far in life following orders like a good little Autobot.

He reached the power station in what felt like no time at all. Decepticons on the ground heard him coming and began firing. He took evasive manoeuvres and fired back, hitting a gas line and causing an explosion. Heat flared and he heard his victims scream, their tiny distant forms scattering like panicked ants.

He laughed sadistically, but nearly fell out of the sky with fright when the powerful surge of a fusion blast shot into the sky not far from his flight path.

Megatron was on the roof of the power station. And had just shot at him.

He transformed and dropped heavily, too angry to remember grace. "Are you crazy!" He yelled, pointing his weapon. "You shot at me!"

Megatron had a wry smile. He held up his servos passively, his cannon still smoking on his arm. "A warning shot. You nearly blew up half my faction."

"They're fine." Starscream huffed. "Just a little scorched."

"So are you." Megatron sauntered closer, servos still up. "'Just a little scorched'."

Starscream decided to let it slide. He'd shoot at Megatron later and even out the score card a little. He couldn't say he wouldn't be aiming to at least maim though...

Sensing his cooling temper, Megatron dropped his arms and came forward with purpose now. He

reached to take him by the waist, possessively overfamiliar with his frame. Starscream backed away but had to concede and let him when Megatron insisted. He turned his helm to the side when Megatron tried to kiss him though, twitching away from his affections.

Lips froze against his cheek, and Megatron drew back. "What is it?"

Starscream glared at the roof. "Prime's on his way."

"Then why are we wasting time." A hint of impatience seeped into Megatron's tone. His thumbs rubbed the armour above his hips, digits gripping. He knocked their foreheads together, optics dim. "Come here..."

Starscream lifted a servo and caught Megatron's chin before he could be subjected to one of his logic melting kisses. He looked into his enemy, and lover's, face seriously. "What you said yesterday?"

Megatron tilted his helm and managed to kiss the tips of his fingers, humming. "For you to join me?"

"I'm not going to."

Megatron stopped. The arms around Starscream's waist loosened. His optics flicked up to meet Starscream's. "...Oh?"

To anyone else it might have looked like a simple, mild reaction. But Starscream knew Megatron's tells well. His jaw was tight, his optics hard- he was always so quick to anger. Starscream pushed at the arms around him, knowing it would be wiser to create some distance.

But Megatron's grip tightened again. He didn't let go. It was like he was scared to.

"Megatron-"

"Is this it then?" He asked sharply, mouth pulling into a frown that grew more severe by the moment. "You choose the ideals you claimed to care nothing for, over me?"

Starscream couldn't help it. He snorted. "I'm not choosing anything. You made that stupid ultimatum, not me. I don't care if we're on different sides-"

"I do." Megatron interrupted stubbornly, almost childish with it. "You don't belong with them. You know you don't-"

"I don't belong with your gross faction either." Starscream argued back, thinking he might as well be childish too. "The *Ark* doesn't leak and it's clean. What does the *Nemesis* have to offer, besides rust?"

"Me." Megatron glowered. "And my fondness for you. You'd be fighting for a better cause-"

"What's better about it." Starscream sniffed stubbornly.

Megatron was looking at him like he'd just transformed into a duck. "What's better- *everything*, Starscream! A better future for mechs like us."

Starscream didn't appreciate being lumped in with a bunch of dirty misfit Decepticons.

"Us? I didn't need a better future, I already had a good life. Maybe the system was never in my favour, but it never stood in my way."

"Oh, and you breezed through life, didn't you?" Listening to Megatron's sarcasm was like being hit in the face with a brick. "I'm sure the science academies welcomed a seeker into their ranks with

open arms."

"So what if they didn't?" Starscream felt himself warm with embarrassment. "I was good enough to prove them wrong anyway!"

Megatron looked beyond disappointed. And for some reason it hurt to see that judgement on his face.

"You chose the easiest option."

Starscream struggled to deny that accusation. He sneered.

"You just want me on the *Nemesis* so I'm a more convenient booty call!"

"I want you to be safe. Surely your safety is worth a... a bit of rust!?"

"It's not a *bit of rust*. It's dilapidated." Starscream snarled.

"That can't be all that's keeping you from me. Rust? An ideal you don't care for? So what is it?"

Megatron gave him a little shake. There was an edge of desperation to his voice now. "Why won't be mine?"

"I-" Starscream struggled, the word 'mine' bouncing around his brain and muddling his thoughts, "-I-I have to- my friends-"

"*Friends*." Megatron snorted. "Friends you don't trust, you mean? Friends you wouldn't dare admit the truth to."

"Of course not!" Starscream blanched. "And you've no room to talk. It's not like you can advertise our relationship either."

Megatron was silent.

It dawned on a Starscream. His mouth opened with an indignant gasp. "You *didn't*-"

"Only those I trust." Megatron was quick to try and reassure him.

"Who?!"

"Only Soundwave." He admitted. "... And his cassettes know."

Starscream wanted to slap him. He couldn't believe he'd been so stupid. "Those immature little idiots, Rumble and Frenzy?"

Megatron tried to cup his cheek, but Starscream pushed him off. "No wonder you wanted me to join your stupid cause. You're the one who put me in danger! You and your big mouth!"

"Obviously, that wasn't my intention." Megatron growled, but Starscream was sick of listening to him and his preaching. He stepped back, shaking his helm.

"Starscream," Megatron followed. "We're not finished."

"No," Starscream's resolve felt strong, for now at least. "I think we are."

Megatron's optics paled, and it was the closest to fear Starscream had ever seen on his face. He relished it as much as he hated it, because he wanted to hurt him, wanted him to relent first. Starscream flashed him one last look of resentment before leaping into the air.

He left Megatron on the roof, staring after him, looking shocked and spark-broken. He spitefully enjoyed it for all of three seconds before his own distraction made him the perfect target for a Decepticon blaster.

It hit his left wing, punching a hole clear through the middle of it. The pain hadn't even registered before his tanks jumped into his throat as he fell, spinning out of control, flailing in a panic.

The last thing he thought before hitting the ground, head first, was that he hoped Megatron hadn't just seen that.

How embarrassing.

Megatron *had* seen that. He had working optics and brightly coloured seeker's spinning out of the air trailing smoke were hard to miss. He and every other blasted witness around the power-station had seen him fall.

Megatron was even less fortunate for having been close enough to hear the sickening crunch of Starscream hitting the ground.

Spark in his throat, he rushed to the edge of the roof and leant right over the edge. Starscream lay below, motionless on the ground, wing smoking and limbs splayed.

"Starscream," he breathed, willing the motionless figure below to move, twitch, *anything* to show he still functioned.

The station was too high for him to jump from safely, especially at his age, but he did it anyway. He cringed when his pedes slammed into the ground and the shock of his landing shuddered through his shins and went straight to the sensors in his knees. He stumbled upright, ignoring the ache as he furiously shooed the curious seekers that had landed to come see their fallen enemy.

"Guard the perimeter." He snapped, struggling not to just throw himself at Starscream in a panic and raise more questions than he wanted to answer.

They did as he asked and he dropped to a crouch beside Starscream, his digits shaking ridiculously when he touched a smooth, warm cheek. He felt soft breaths against the back of his servo. Still functioning then.

Megatron peered at the nasty dent on the helm. "Foolish seeker."

Nothing Hook's expertise couldn't handle. He would take Starscream back with him, again as a 'prisoner', and perhaps then they could straighten this whole mess out. Without anyone getting their spark ripped to shreds this time.

He gently rolled Starscream onto his back, careful not to damage his wing any further, and was about to lean down and hoist his limp frame up and over his shoulder when the shouting and blaster fire started.

One shot landed on the ground just meters from where he knelt, scorching the ground black. He looked up, and of course, the Autobot cavalry had arrived.

"Step away from the Screamer." A young Autobot front-liner stepped forwards with his weapon raised, "or the next one goes between you optics, Megacreep."

Megatron snarled, but remained crouched over Starscream's form. The Autobot was flanked by it's yellow twin. They were both proficient fighters, but he had been raised in the pits.

"You're punching above your weights, younglings."

Neither twin backed down. The red one sniffed. "Maybe we are, but *he's* not."

The sound of a whirring weapon met Megatron's audials. Carefully, he angled his helm back, and found Ironhide behind him, weapon cocked and ready.

With a deep sinking regret, Megatron realised he wasn't going to be taking Starscream anywhere without a fight. With a resentful grumble, he rose. The weapons followed him.

Ironhide's optics flicked down, taking in Starscream. "What 'ave yer done to 'im?"

"He was shot." Megatron hissed through his denta at the accusatory tone. "And he crashed."

"By you, no doubt." The red twin brandished his weapon. "What with you being so interested in him lately. We should take him in, 'Hide. Give him a taste of his own medicine."

Ironhide grunted in agreement and took a step forward.

He didn't get any further though, because a zap of electricity crackled in the air and in the next moment Skywarp and Thundercracker emerged from a purple flash and were between him and the Autobots, weapons raised.

"Back off, Autobitches." Skywarp snarled at the twins.

"Eh, look Sides." The yellow twin nudged his brother. "It's the Decepti-dunce."

Skywarp's nullray began to glow, but beneath them, at their pedes, Starscream stirred with a groan.

"He needs a medic." Ironhide growled, his weapon dropping slightly. "This stand off's not doing anything but wasting time n' like frag am I letting you touch 'im."

Skywarp and Thundercracker glanced back at him, waiting for his orders. Starscream's helm lolled to the side, his brow creased with pain.

Megatron wanted him. He wanted to carry him back to base and remain at his side for however many hours the medics worked on him. He wanted to make sure he was alright. He wanted to be the first face he woke up to again. He wanted to tell him that he'd been wrong, and the only thing he truly cared about was being with him, whether he was Autobot, Decepticon, or even Neutral.

"Take him." He snapped, stepping out of the way, nodding to Thundercracker and Skywarp to lower their weapons. The Autobot twins dived forwards, scooping Starscream up between them and rushing him out of the firing line. Ironhide kept his weapon up, covering them until they were clear.

With an aggressive snort, he left too.

Megatron watched them take Starscream away, worry overriding his sense of damaged pride at letting them have their way.

"-call the retreat, sir?" Thundercracker was asking.

Megatron hummed noncommittally. "I suppose we should."

The seekers took off to carry out his orders. Megatron left them to it. He had no intention of retreating, not until he was sure Starscream was alright.

And the seeker always had pestered for him to visit the *Ark*...

Starscream woke up with a throbbing processor ache. The overhead lights were too bright and the hum of machinery too loud. Only Ratchet would be inconsiderate enough to leave the lights on full when his patient was recovering from a head injury. "Ugh, you sadistic Hatchet."

"Hello to you too." Ratchet commented proudly from his left. "You can online your optics, drama-queen. You're good as new."

Starscream cracked an optic open and grasped the side of his now un-dented helm. "Oh, really?"

"The processor ache will go away soon." Ratchet reassured. "So stop whining. You'll be fine." He paused, then added. "Well... for now."

"For now?" Starscream winced.

"You're in trouble." Ratchet said solemnly, but his wry smile ruined it. "Insubordination."

"I never-!" Starscream thought back. Prime telling him to pull back and not go off ahead. Him doing it anyway. Then him having an argument with Megatron. *Then* getting shot out of the sky by some trigger happy con.

Oh.

Yes, he probably was in a bit of trouble.

"How did I get back here?" His battered pride almost didn't want him to ask.

"Hide and the twins had to pretty much prise you out of that miserable tin-can Megatron's claws." Ratchet was shaking his helm. "Count yourself lucky they were there. They said he was trying to make off with you again. Creep."

Starscream struggled to arrange his expression into something appropriate. He remembered what he'd said to end their argument, and a paranoid anxious part of him wondered if it had been Megatron that had shot him out of the sky because of it.

To hurt him? To stop him getting away?

He shuddered, spark aching at the thought of being hurt by someone he'd... someone...

"Don't get upset now." Ratchet's gruff manner suddenly transmuted into awkward reassurance, and to Starscream's horror he realised moisture had gathered beneath his optics. "You know we'd never let him take one of our own-"

Starscream shook his helm angrily. "I'm not upset! Your lights are too bright!"

Ratchet snapped right back to his usually obstinate attitude. He turned to the controls and turned the brightness up. Starscream hissed and covered his optics.

"Argh! Haven't I suffered enough?!"

"No." Ratchet drawled unsympathetically. "Now get out of here. I have more patients to see and their injuries aren't as self inflicted."

"I didn't shoot *myself*."

"No. But you were happy enough to put yourself in the firing range without backup, weren't you?"

Starscream ground his denta together. He swung his legs off the medical berth, grumbling about medical malpractice under his breath.

"Keep an audial out for Prime." Ratchet reminded him, watching him rise. "I'm sure he won't waste much time before hunting you down for a lecture on following orders and personal safety."

"Oh joy."

"And Starscream?"

Starscream turned around at Ratchet's serious tone. "What?"

"You know I'm bound by patient confidentiality." Ratchet arched a brow. "Like I said before. Anything you wanna tell me-"

"Nothing." Starscream interrupted, perhaps too harshly. "There's nothing to tell."

Ratchet didn't at all look convinced. But then he'd always known Starscream was a liar.

Starscream didn't linger in the hallways and kept his helm low, avoiding the gaze of passersby and ignoring their attempts at making small talk. No doubt they'd all seen him yet again being rescued from the clutches of Decepticons -or *one* Decepticon in particular- and his battered pride wasn't yet ready to cope with their judgements.

Or worse; their unwanted sympathies.

There was also the matter of Prime, and whatever emotionally draining lecture/punishment he had in store for him. He wondered if this incident would do anything to lessen Prime's suspicion regarding him, or if it was only going to raise more questions. There was now an undeniable link between himself and Megatron, and he was sure Prime and the rest of command were going to want to know what it was about him that interested their enemy so.

He reached his quarters and pressed the entry control hastily. Despite Ratchet's reassurances that his processor ache was soon to fade, it felt like someone was drilling a hole into his helm through his optics, and then playing loud bass booming music directly into his processor.

He groaned, stumbling over the threshold blindly, optics shuttered. He wanted to recharge for days and forget everything that had occurred in the last twenty or so hours. Maybe when he woke up again everything would be back to the way it was.

He stopped before he arrived at his berth, flicking his optics fully online when he realised how clear and clutter free his path from the door to his berth had been. He hadn't tripped over anything once. He looked down, and realised, with a little niggle of confused worry, that someone had cleaned up.

Not him, obviously. He had better things to do than clean up after himself.

"What the-" The berth was even made. The covers smoothed out and folded neatly. Pillows arranged. The purple stolen one sat amongst them.

Someone had been in here. *Someone* had touched his belongings and-

"Starscream?"

Starscream screamed and must have jumped a foot in the air.

Because there, lurking in the corner of the berthroom like a psychopath, hiding in the shadows behind the door Starscream had just passed through, in all his weathered and mud smeared glory from their earlier battle, was Megatron.

In his room. On the *Ark*. In broad-fragging-daylight. In the middle of the on-shift.

Idiot.

Chapter 5

"What the Pit are you doing here?!" Starscream screeched when he had the breath to do so, his optics so wide with shock he thought they were going to blow. "What is *wrong* with you?!"

Megatron seemed to have expected this reaction, because he was ready to lift his servos passively, even before Starscream had his null-rays up and off their stun setting.

"I needed to see you," Megatron managed to keep his tone steady and even. His expression was open with unguarded emotion.

Starscream didn't like it. He brandished his weapon, wanting him to at *least* flinch for Primus's sake. "You needed to be sure you'd *finished the job*, you mean?!"

Megatron's brow creased below his helmet, "Starscream, what-?"

"I was shot out of the sky!" He snarled. "Moments after I told *you* to take a hike. That's not a coincidence-

"You were shot because you were too busy smirking at me to pay attention to where you were going!" Megatron barked, advancing out of the dark corner suddenly. In the full lighting he was somehow scarier, bigger-

-*Huge* in Starscream's cramped quarters.

He flinched. His back hit the bulkhead and he realised he had backed up in fright and wedged himself into the corner. Megatron was in front of him within moments, blocking the overhead lights and yanking his nullray to the side. Starscream twitched, but there was little use fighting against Megatron's strength.

"Let go of me." He said stiffly. "Or I'll raise the alarm and *laugh* when they shoot you."

Megatron huffed in sarcastic amusement, hot air rushing from his vents and washing over Starscream. "No you won't."

"I won't, will I?" He snarled, and he wanted to follow up with a line about how Megatron being killed would make his life so much easier, when a big servo gripped the side of his face, turned his helm.

"What are you doing?!" He tried to wriggle and bat Megatron off but with his nullray angled away he couldn't move his arm. "Get your filthy Con-servos off me!"

Megatron ignored all protests and squirming. A thumb stroked over the recently repaired dent in his helm, and Megatron's expression softened looking at it. "I needed to know you were alright."

Starscream halfheartedly slapped him off again, scowling at a fixed point over the larger mech's shoulder so he wouldn't have to meet his gaze, "...It's fine."

"I didn't shoot you." Megatron reaffirmed, and the intense crimson of his optics were locked with Starscream's. He tried to look away but Megatron held him so he couldn't. "Of course, I didn't."

Starscream didn't want to believe him. It would be easier to stay angry at him if he had. He felt the burn of his spark wilt away at Megatron's sincerity though, and with self-deprecating irritation,

realised he probably wouldn't have been able to stay angry at the stupid old mech even if he *had* shot him.

He was more angry with himself for so easily letting himself believe that Megatron would have done that...

There was deep sigh, and warm breath washed across Starscream's face.

"I am sorry." Megatron rumbled.

Starscream blinked at the apology.

"You are?" He said dumbly.

"For trying to force a choice out of you." Megatron was still petting his helm, but his servo was slipping down to cup his jaw, the thumb smoothing across the soft derma of his cheek. "I had no right to force my views. Or to criticise your place among your..."

He appeared to struggle for a moment, because spitting out, "...*friends*."

Starscream shrugged, fighting back a little smirk. "Yes well, they may be judgemental bunch of jerks, but they still-"

"Starscream, I want to be with you."

Starscream lost his train of thought. He blinked up at him. "Huh?"

Megatron cupped his face in both of his huge servos, tilting it up, drawing him in. "Autobot or Decepticon, it doesn't matter to me who you are, so long as you're mine."

Starscream felt warm and uncomfortable, but there was nowhere to go in his corner. Megatron was staring down at him with sincere expectation, likely waiting for a declaration just as spark-felt and sappy -and Megatron was supposed to be a Decepticon for sparks sake! And speaking of un-Decepticonly behaviour...

"Did you clean my room?"

This clearly wasn't the response Megatron had been expecting to hear. "...I did."

"You weirdo," Starscream pulled a face, taking Megatron's wrists and pulling them away from his face. His cheeks were searing hot. He fanned himself briefly, hastily, "Why?"

"I needed something to do," Megatron's huge shoulders rose in a shrug. "You were in medical longer than I expected. I thought it better to remain distracted than storm through your base looking for you."

Starscream wondered what the look on Ratchet's face would have been if Megatron had burst into his medibay and made another attempt at 'kidnapping him'. And he wondered who would have won the subsequent fight.

"It was a disgusting mess." Megatron added after a moment, "I can't believe Prime would allow you to live like that."

"It wasn't disgusting!" Starscream argued, servos on his hips, "and I'll have you know I pass every room inspection!"

Megatron's mouth curled at the corner, "When was the last inspection?"

"Shut up," Starscream mumbled under his breath and waved a servo, "There are more important things to argue about, like *why* you thought this was a good idea?!"

"You did invite me." Megatron turned and began to survey the room. Starscream was now both glad and mortified that he'd cleaned up. He couldn't remember how many embarrassing things he'd left laying about.

"I thought it time I made a visit."

Starscream followed him across the room, servos twisting together. "I meant at night. Late. When everyone's asleep and not roaming the corridors. Did anyone see you?"

"I left no witnesses."

Starscream's optics flared. "Did you kill someone?!" He hissed.

Megatron huffed in amusement, "Of course not."

"Then why say it like that?!"

"To wind you up."

Starscream yanked a pillow off the neatly made berth and smacked him on the shoulder with it.

"Stop it! I'm recovering from a head injury."

A brow arched, "You said you were fine."

"I was until you turned up."

Megatron rounded on him, genuine mischief in the optics of a mech far too old for that sort of thing. Starscream nudged him away with the shake of his helm, "Don't look at me like..."

Megatron stepped closer, looming over Starscream. "Like what?"

"Like that!" He pointed at the smirk on Megatron's face but his servo was seized, tugged. He fell forward with a noise of surprise and his armour clunked against Megatron's. An arm closed around his waist and Megatron's forehead met his with a little tap.

"You made a promise to me. About Prime's office."

Starscream's optics flared, "Not while he's *in* it, bolt-brain. It's the middle of the shift."

"Then we'll have to find something to do till the shift ends." Megatron turned his helm and nudged the side of Starscream's face with his nose. He inhaled, like he was smelling him, then humid warmth washed over his cheek when he released it. His servo dropped down Starscream's aft, lingering a moment before giving it a squeeze.

Starscream leant a little closer, liking the warmth of Megatron's powerful chest against his front. He placed his servos against the smooth flat armour, feeling the rumble of engines and moving parts beneath.

"You can do me?" He offered coyly.

Megatron made a noise of deep satisfaction, nuzzling into his neck. "Oh, I plan to..."

Despite his earlier efforts cleaning up, Megatron felt no qualms about sweeping an arm across Starscream's neatly made berth and knocking the stacked pillows to the floor. He threw Starscream down in their place, watching him bounce once against the firm padding, an endearingly surprised look on his face.

"Oof!"

Before he could get his bearings, Megatron wrapped a servo around a blue thruster and pulled him back to the edge of the berth, ignoring his hiss of, "don't pull on those!" He held the thruster up for inspection, leaving Starscream awkwardly splayed and wriggling on his front on the berth below.

He circled the rim of the thruster heel with the pad of his thumb, letting it dip into the dark internal components briefly.

Starscream spasmed and tried to kick him, "That's sensitive!"

Megatron snorted and gave the arch of his pede a brief massage in apology, just to keep him sweet. He let go and now free, Starscream tried to climb back onto the berth properly instead of having his legs hanging over the edge. Megatron placed a servo on the small of his back, preventing that as he came to stand between Starscream's legs, nudging them further apart with his knees.

Starscream huffed into the berth's covers and lifted his helm to see what was going on behind him.

Megatron dropped to his knees so he was level with Starscream's upturned aft. He gripped smooth shapely white thighs and groped with relish. They were the perfect size for his servos, ample and strong. They twitched against his palms when he growled lustfully, Starscream's aft jumping in anticipation.

He leant in and licked a long wet stripe up and over Starscream's groin and aft. The frame in his servos stiffened, and then relaxed again with a groan.

"Megatron..."

Megatron hummed and licked him again, slower this time, glossa probing at the seams of his valve panel. It shot open in the next instant and Megatron's olfactory was filled with the musky saline scent of a seeker who was very wet indeed.

Starscream's valve was pretty, a neat little bud that opened up to reveal folds of beautifully silk-like mesh that could and did take whatever he deigned to give it. It's anterior node glowed the same romantic red as Starscream's armour, always so swollen and pulsing for attention.

He dragged his glossa over it, humming at the taste of Starscream when his glossa slipped between those folds and sampled the building lubricant. He always grew so wet so fast. Megatron lapped at him hungrily, licking into the slit until he had the mesh parting and the tiny hole that lead to his internals dilating with anticipation.

Megatron stuck his glossa into it, feeling calliper walls clench and release around him. His grip tightened on Starscream when the seeker tried to escape from the intensity of it. He was mewling, clawing at the berth, rocking his hips down to create friction against the throbbing node.

Megatron lifted his helm and wiped his mouth with the back of his servo. Starscream let out a long, low moan. But Megatron wasn't done with him yet.

"Roll over."

Starscream did, flipping onto his back, optics dazed and mouth open to pant as the stared at the ceiling. Megatron tugged on an ankle, rising from his knees to stand over him. "Helm this side."

Starscream seemed to get the idea, but he took his sweet time lifting his legs up and turning around.

While he waited, Megatron released his codpiece. His spike was mostly still tucked away in it's sheath, just the tip poking out in interest. He massaged it gently between his thumb and forefinger and it started to fill and harden, emerging more impressively from it's housing.

Starscream saw and moved more enthusiastically, dropping back to the berth with his helm hanging upside down off the end of it, level with Megatron's stiffening spike. He licked his lips.

"Relax your throat." Megatron advised.

Starscream scowled, but upside down it lost some of it's edge. "I know how to do it."

Megatron shrugged, "You Autobots don't exactly strike me as adventurous..."

Starscream didn't deny that, but he might just be the Autobot-exception to every Autobot-rule.

Megatron dragged his fist along the length of his spike until he was good and hard, his length throbbing with it's desire for friction and pressure. He rubbed his thumb over the leaking tip, gathering pre-fluid, and extended it to Starscream.

Starscream's glossa darted out and licked it off.

A throb of want pulsed through Megatron and he couldn't wait any longer. He shuffled close, tipping Starscream's helm to get the angle right, bending his knees a little, and guided his spike into Starscream's warm, wet, open mouth.

He let Starscream play with it first, licking at the sensors and leaking tip, suckling rigorously on the head, then the urge to sink deeper became too much. He pressed forwards and felt himself slip into Starscream's intake. Starscream choked, but stilled, throat clenching and working around him.

One of Starscream's servos darted down his frame and shoved itself between his legs as he began touching himself, elegant digits rolling over and pinching his node.

Megatron took that as a sign to continue.

He sank in until he could no more, hilt deep, Starscream's perfect pouting lips stretched obscenely around his girth. He could feel the seeker's harsh breathing, huffing out of his nose and tickling the base of Megatron's spike and valve cover.

He started to move, drawing his hips back and bucking them forwards. Starscream choked and gagged around him, but didn't push him off, too busy fingering himself desperately. His cheeks were bright red and his optics so dim they weren't blue anymore.

Megatron groaned at the sight, bending over Starscream and seizing the turbines of his heaving chest, one in each greedy fist. He squeezed and stroked them as he fragged their owner's mouth, dragged his thumbs over fan blades and relished the soft noises of pleasure being muffled from Starscream's

mouth by his own stiff length.

Starscream whined and swallowed around him. Megatron saw his throat working, gag reflex rising then aborting at the last minute. His optics almost rolled into the back of his helm at the sound, at the *feel* of being in Starscream's mouth. He grunted, a vague warning.

Starscream didn't try and push him away so he took the seeker's helm in both hands, held him steady, and overloaded with a loud, unbidden moan, straight down Starscream's intake. Starscream huffed, his frame jumping with surprise. Megatron felt his spike empty in pulses, long pauses between powerful spurts that took him by surprise, until finally, he was finished.

He stepped back carefully and Starscream turned his helm and gasped and coughed loudly. He rolled onto his front and Megatron stroked the back of his helm as he struggled to clear his throat and breathe.

Megatron yanked a draw open from a berthside table and pulled out a cleaning cloth he tidied away there earlier. Starscream took it gratefully, willing his face of fluid and spit.

"Huguhh.."

"Starscream?" Megatron dropped to his knees to look at his face, but Starscream flapped at him and his fussing, just needing a moment to recover.

When he finally could, he let his helm flop to the side, optics shuttered.

"That was... that was nice." He sighed dreamily.

Megatron felt himself relax. He could be- no, he *was* rough sometimes. Some mechs could handle it, others couldn't. Starscream being smaller and more 'finely tuned' than most was probably closer to the latter, but it never seemed to stop him.

Megatron kissed the side of his helm, "Did you finish, at least?"

The dreamy little smile crossing Starscream's face widened. He lifted his servo, and it was damp with lubricant. He wiggled his digits. "What do you think?" He snickered, voice more hoarse than usual.

Megatron took the cleaning cloth and began wiping his digits down too.

"What do you want to do now?" Starscream watched him, optics soft. "I'm feeling very liberal this evening."

Megatron hummed his agreement. "I noticed."

Starscream rose onto his forearms and kissed him. Megatron could taste himself on him, a heady musky flavour. He didn't mind, parting his lips and letting Starscream tease him with glossa. He rumbled happily and managed to continue the kiss as he rose and climbed onto the berth, rolling Starscream onto his back.

There was something startling intimate about touching one another like this, without the fervour of an interface, current or impending. Starscream was supple and affectionate beneath him, stroking his back and humming playfully into their kisses. Megatron pulled away and nuzzled his cheek, inhaling his scent.

A small part of him wilted at how unlikely an opportunity like this would come again. Illicit romps in

the woods weren't the best setting for it, but sneaking into one another bases just wasn't worth it for post-coital cuddling.

He lifted himself up onto his forearms and Starscream looked up at him, blue optics startling bright against his dark face. "You're beautiful," Megatron told him, because it was easier than offloading the myriad of emotions plaguing him.

Starscream responded with a clever little smile, "For an Autobot?"

"For anyone."

Starscream's face seemed to change expression endlessly before it settled on exasperation- but the flush from his embarrassment was still there. He squirmed, and Megatron felt the warmth of his bared valve against his thigh. Still wet.

He shifted, working his hips between Starscream's legs, letting his half-hard spike nudge the inside of his smooth thigh. Starscream's blush grew brighter.

Megatron knew what he wanted.

He slipped inside, the way was eased with the slickness of Starscream's overload, but tight and unprepared for the girth of his spike. Starscream cried out, a noise sharp with surprise but utterly desperate. Megatron fragged him nice and slow, watching him writhe and squirm as his thrusts grew wetter and wetter.

Both the scent and sound of him filled the room. Megatron dropped his helm and sighed into his audial, wondering how he managed to pull it back to this from Starscream trying to break up with him earlier that day.

Someone must have been looking down on him.

Starscream ached good.

He lay with his helm pillowed on Megatron's shoulder, dozing off to the sensation of his wings being stroked. Megatron's helm turned and he felt his nose nudge the top of his helm, warm vents exhaling over him.

He drew a little circle with his finger against Megatron's chest. "How are you going to get out of here if you use up all your energy on me?"

"I have plenty of energy, Starscream." His chest rumbled beneath Starscream's servo. "You don't need another reminder?"

Starscream squeezed his thighs together, felling the lingering pinch of a thorough fragging. "No," he sighed, "Not for another few hours at least."

He peered up at Megatron resentfully, "And you'll be gone by then."

"Will I?"

"Unless you want someone to burst in here and find us like this because I haven't left my room for

hours."

"Ah, yes." Megatron sounded sarcastic, "Your 'friends' will begin to worry."

Starscream arched a brow, lifting his helm from Megatron's shoulder to squint at him. "Why did you say 'friends' like that? I have friends."

Megatron looked away, "I don't doubt it-"

Starscream took his chin and turned him back again. "Then what?"

He was gripping too forcefully, his digits digging into the derma and exaggerating Megatron's pout. Megatron brushed Starscream's touch away, looking conflicted and annoyed at what he was going to say.

"Just how *close* are these friends of yours?"

Oh, oh it made sense now.

A smile curved his mouth, cruel and smug. "Why, Lord Megatron, are you *jealous*?"

"No," Megatron snorted, sounding very jealous. He sat upright too. "Don't I have a right to ask? Soundwave has been watching you, and you seem close with that shuttle-"

"Skyfire?" Starscream supplied, then scowled when the rest of that he'd said sunk in. "You have Soundwave spying on me?!"

"Soundwave spies on the Autobots as a whole." Megatron corrected. Then added at the end. "And that he pays particular attention to you is just a precaution. How will else would I know if you needed me?"

"I don't need you."

"If something happened-"

"Nothing's going to happen. This is the *Ark*, not the *Nemesis*, we don't... chew on each other when we run out of fuel."

Megatron scowled. "It's for my peace of mind."

"So... if I ever caused enough trouble here, your spy would drop down from the ceiling and rescue me?"

Megatron didn't respond. Which was answer enough.

He shrugged, and thought he might as well put the poor old warlord out of his misery. "To answer your first invasive question; No, there's no one else. Just you."

That seemed to cheer Megatron up, so Starscream added, "But now that I know you get so jealous maybe I will start to appreciate the dozens of interested suitors that come scratching at the my door all night?"

He smirked to show he was joking, but Megatron was already rising with a growl. Starscream laughed sharply, squealing when his wrists were seized and he was pinned back to the berth. Megatron looked over him, huge and heavy and enough to make Starscream's tanks flutter with desire again and-

There was a bang on the door. Starscream's spark froze. Above him Megatron stilled, half-turning to look at the sealed door.

"*Starscream?*" A voice called on the other side. He recognised a breathless impatient Sideswipe. Another bang sounded. "*Starscream open the door! We're on a security lockdown.*"

Starscream's vocaliser spat static with panic. Above him Megatron just looked at him, optics bright and surprise and cluelessness.

Useless old-

"Whu- why?" He managed eventually, curling his digits around Megatron's where his servos were pinned. He squeezed them.

"*Just open the door, Screamer,*" it was Sunstreaker this time that yelled, "*We've gotta search every room.*"

"*Yeah!*" Sideswipe yelled again, "*You want Megatron to slag us all in our recharge?*"

Starscream's spark dropped into his tanks and felt like it was being digested by the corrosive acids down there. Megatron. They knew he was- he'd been *seen*.

So much for 'no witnesses', big idiot. If he'd had more time he probably would have yelled at him. But he didn't have time. He looked into Megatron's constipated expression and wondered how the pit they were going to get out of this one.

"Get under the berth." He whispered.

Megatron stared at him like he was insane, but he wasn't offering any better suggestions, "That won't-"

"Shh!" Starscream pushed him off and yanked up the berth covers, "Get under there. Don't make any noise."

Megatron looked more than a little peeved at the idea of cowering under the berth. "I won't hide-"

"You have to-"

"I can fight out!"

"You're not killing my friends!"

There was another bang that made him jump, the twin's voices growing angrier. "*Who are you talking to? Screamer? Screamer are you alright?!*"

"Please." Starscream begged.

Megatron closed his optics in resignation, then dropped down, and rolled smoothly under the berth.

Starscream checked to be sure he was hidden, kicking at him when he tried to lean out and argue some more.

He scooped up the pillows from the floor and threw them back on the berth, doing everything he could to make it look like he'd been alone all afternoon and not entertaining the leader of the enemy faction in berth.

"Screamer, we're blowing the door! Stand back."

"No!" Starscream yelled back, but he knew it was useless. In the time he still had, he scrambled to wipe at the mess on his thighs to rid himself of more evidence. Outside he heard a click, then whir, then had to duck when the door blew.

"Idiots!" He yelled into the dust and smoke where the door had been. "Why did you blow it down?!"

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker swept into the room, blasters aloft, "What the pit, Screamer, why didn't you open the door?!"

"I was about to!" He snarled, "I was busy!"

"We told you *Megatron* is in the base." Sideswipe continued to argue, "*Meg-a-tron*. Obviously an emergency, why wouldn't you-"

"Enough boys," Ratchet's gruff voice interrupted them and Sideswipe earned himself a smack around the back of the helm. "He's recovering from the head injury. He was probably asleep..."

Starscream nodded enthusiastically, grasping at whatever he could. "I- yes, I was as a matter of fact, I-"

Ratchet waved him silent, "Yeah alright whatever. Search the room, then we'll move on-"

"Sure," Sideswipe grumbled, still rubbing the back of his helm.

He and his brother moved forwards, further into the room, peering around furniture as they went. Sunstreaker went towards the berth and stooped as though to look under it.

Starscream grabbed him before he could, panic overriding sense. "Wait!"

Averse to being touched under even the best of circumstances, Sunstreaker wiped around and shoved the blaster in his face, angry and suspicious, "What are you hiding?"

"Nothing, I-!"

It wouldn't have mattered if Starscream had managed to dissolve the situation.

From under the berth Megatron had seen the blaster swing towards his face, and it didn't matter that Sunstreaker and Sideswipe were just a bunch of jerks that would never have *really* shot him, because Megatron overprotective and territorial and had gotten it into his processor that it was his *duty* to defend his illicit Autobot lover, and he was nothing if not a mech of duty.

It was like it all happened in slow motion for Starscream, perhaps because he'd known it was going to happen.

The berth rose from the floor to reveal an angry warlord, who effortlessly flung the frame across the room where it slammed into the opposite wall. Sideswipe yelled, Sunstreaker cried out when a huge black fist closed around his wrist and broke it with a snap and crumple, Ratchet swore a blue-streak, and Starscream didn't know if any one of them was going to get out of this room alive.

Chapter 6

Starscream sat with his servos placed flat on the table, back straight and optics forward. Across from him, Prowl glowered, the weight of his judgement sitting heavy in the room, thickening the air, making it hard to breathe.

Next to him, Prime sat with his helm bowed, saying nothing.

And somehow that was worse.

Starscream opened his mouth, "I really don't have any idea how he got in there."

Prowl's fist hit the table with a slam. Starscream felt his nerves jolt but he refused to flinch. Instead of reproaching his tactician, Optimus merely shuttered his optics.

The knot in Starscream's chest tightened.

"Data shows you were holed up in there together for *hours* and you're telling me you didn't *notice* the homicidal maniac?!" Prowl slammed his servos down again and leant forwards, in full interrogation-mode now.

"He was hiding under my berth!" Starscream threw his arms up, veering back in his seat.

Prowl's expression twisted. He straightened stiffly and without breaking optical-contact held out a remote, pointing it at the interrogation room's large screen -made large so the evidence displayed was only more damning. The screen switched on, showing security footage of empty corridors. Starscream's throat felt constricted, like it was trying to prevent his spark from clawing it's way up and out of his mouth. The footage flickered and fuzzed every five seconds, but little else occurred.

Megatron had done a lot of stupid things in a past few hours, but he'd had the sense to put the security footage on a loop, at least.

Prowl lowered the remote. "Only certain security cameras were put on a loop. Footage from cameras that covered Megatron's point of entry, all the way to *your* quarters, which implies this break-in was planned, premeditated-"

"Are you saying I had something to do with it?!"

"You were undergoing repairs in the medbay." Prime spoke for the first time, but his voice was void of emotion. No comfort, but no condemnation.

Starscream pointed at Prime and looked at Prowl, "Exactly! Thank you!"

"And what did you do upon returning to your quarters?"

"I laid down." Starscream sat back and folded his arms. "To aid my recovery, I went to recharge."

"And you noticed nothing out of place upon your return?"

Starscream worked his glossa around his mouth. "No."

"And Megatron remained hidden and unmoving, beneath the berth you were recharging on for several hours, *alone* with your guard at it's lowest, right up until the armed search party entered, at which point he decided to attack?"

Starscream shrugged, "It appears so."

Prowl looked moments away from flipping the table. "You *knew* he was in there." He leant in and lowered his voice, optics darkening till the light was almost gone. "You didn't raise the alarm. You didn't call for help."

"I didn't know!"

"If his interest was in kidnapping you, the opportunity had arisen and passed." Prowl's lip curled cruelly. "This, along with your recent behaviour, is not painting you in a good light. This reeks of treacherously-"

"You think I'm a traitor!?" Starscream stood.

"Sit down, Starscream." Optimus said, rising.

Prowl looked smug now though, he tilted his helm. "I did. Until a search of Megatron's person revealed no stolen intel, no sabotaging equipment. He wasn't here on a mission. He was here for something else. What were you giving him, Starscream?"

Starscream's knees felt a little weak. He sank back into his seat again. "I wasn't giving him anything."

"Starscream, I implore you to tell us what you know." Optimus finally became more involved, blue optics piercing and bright and too much to meet head-on. "Megatron is dangerous, and whatever your relationship with him is-"

"There *is* no relationship! I'm telling you, I didn't know he was in there!"

Prowl flicked off the screen and stepped away from the table. "Prime and I will return when you've decided to cooperate."

"I am cooperating!"

Optimus rose wearily, looking like he'd aged thousands of years in the last few hours alone. Starscream thought he was going to say something, one of his reproachful paternal lectures, maybe even an 'I'm disappointed in you' comment. But he said nothing, following Prowl to the door.

Prowl did turn back though.

"Sunstreaker's fine by the way. Ratchet's reattaching the arm."

He shut the door with a slam after him. Starscream waited until he'd heard it clang locked, then dropped his helm to the table with a punishing thunk.

Sunstreaker was tough, and among friends. Starscream knew he'd be alright.

It was Megatron he was worried about.

Jazz's azure visor made it difficult to tell where he was looking, unexpectedly like Soundwave in his stoicism. On the off chance that they were in a staring match, Megatron glared back, determined not

to give anything away.

"So how long has Starscream been your spy?" He finally spoke.

Megatron wasn't stupid enough to answer such a leading question. If Starscream had talked -and that was unlikely- he wouldn't have told them that, and Megatron wasn't about to make an attempt to save him by lessening the accusation from treacherous spy to disloyal fraterniser.

"C'mon man, he's told us the whole thing." Jazz continued, smile bright but false. "'Bout that fake kidnapping? All the secret rendezvous?"

Megatron twitched, wondering how likely it could have been that Jazz had guessed that. He buried that niggles of worry deep, stowed the growing urge to ask after Starscream. Expressing concern for him wouldn't do either of them any favours.

Jazz's visor remained cool and bright, hiding -what Megatron was beginning to suspect- a keen and calculating pair of optics.

"He's fine, by the way," Jazz tilted his helm knowingly, and Megatron wished he could turn his helm away, struggling with his stoicism as Jazz continued to flip through his pages and read him like an open datafile. "For now. But let's be real, if we can't get any information outta you..." Jazz shrugged, "Seekers are pretty sensitive. So much easier to break-"

Megatron's jaw ticked where it was clenched, the rising heat in his chest spreading to his limbs and tensing the protoform beneath his armour. Jazz saw him twitch, his helm tipping ever so slightly.

Whatever he'd read in Megatron's body-language was damning enough. He sighed despairingly, rubbing the back of his neck. "How'd the pit you get him in this mess?"

"What mess?" Megatron sneered, throwing his silence out of the airlock in light of it not helping in the slightest, "isn't suffering your captivity indignity enough without answering stupid questions, too?"

"Don't 'what mess?' me," Jazz wagged a digit at him, "Starscream isn't injured, or brainwashed, or crazy -I *think*. Which means whatever you two got going on, it's..."

He cringed.

Megatron glared.

"...Mutual." Jazz finished, olfactory crinkling at the dilemma.

Megatron's felt his nostrils flare in frustration. Typical Autobots, behaving as though the situation was somehow *worse* for it's consent. They'd rather he be blackmailing their commander, manipulating him.

"This some kinda new recruitment tactic?" Jazz continued, genuinely curious, and confused, and Megatron couldn't understand why it was such puzzle to Jazz that Starscream could garner any sort of positive attention.

Yes, he was a precocious, disrespectful, trouble maker; something Megatron knew even before their affair had started, but he rather liked that about Starscream. Clearly, undesirable behaviour in an Autobot though.

Another reason why Starscream should join him. Another reason why he would.

"Not at first." Megatron admitted.

Jazz's visor flared bright at the open honest admittance, all faux-teasing falling away. "...You really are 'facing him, aren't you?"

Megatron let his answer go unsaid, chin lifting pridefully. With any luck Prime would be watching this from another room, and Megatron's only regret was that he couldn't see the look on Prime's face firsthand when he realised his loyal- perhaps even favourite- commander had been spending his off-shifts spreading his legs for Decepticon-trash out in the woods.

A mech with more tact might have made more of an effort to deny it, but Megatron tired of hiding it, and it wouldn't matter much now anyway- for him or Starscream. His chrono told him he had stalled Jazz sufficiently long enough.

Jazz didn't miss the smirk spreading across his face, and with instinct only gained through thousand of years of war and knowing what a *bad feeling* was when it was coming for him, he raised his comm link.

But it was already too late.

Skywarp stepped out from the cell behind the Autobot. Jazz heard the movement of armour and span to meet a swift right hook. He collapsed, clattering into a heap at Megatron's restrained pedes.

Skywarp waved his weapon around, "Kill him?"

Megatron thought about how much satisfaction that would give him.

Then thought about Starscream's frowning judgmental face.

He sighed.

"Not today."

He sympathised greatly with Skywarp's disappointed huff.

The base's alarm klaxons screamed into action and Starscream's spark jumped into his intake. Weaponless and vulnerable he scrambled for the door. Locked. Great work, Prowl. How the Pit was he supposed to defend himself if a deranged Decepticon burst through the door and tried to kill him?

He picked up his chair and threw it against the bulkhead, hoping to break it down and possibly use one of it's metal legs as an impromptu weapon. He was just twisting one away from the bent frame when over the wail of sirens he heard approaching blaster fire and yelling.

He tugged a little more insistently, muffling his own grunts of exertion when the weapons outside stopped and the shouting died down.

The door clicked, unlocking.

With a curse, Starscream picked up the entire chair, tucking himself against the bulkhead out of sight, ready to swing the haphazard mess he'd made of it at whatever Con came through.

Towering blue shoulders moved through the doorway, red visor snapping instantly to his hiding place and chest turning so a large shoulder-mounted gun was pointing directly at his face. Starscream twitched, grip slipping on the chair.

"Inadvisable." Soundwave warned, weapon glowing softly with charge. "Drop the chair."

Starscream shifted his grip on it, swallowing thickly. "If you're going to shoot me-"

"Unnecessary." Soundwave interrupted, reaching for him, "I have orders to retrieve you."

"You mean kidnap!" Starscream swung the chair at him. Soundwave deftly sidestepped, his weapon brightening again. "I'm not going anywhere with you."

"Lord Megatron would prefer you uninjured." Soundwave's voice deepened menacingly, advancing so Starscream had to back up against a wall until all there was between them was the broken chair.

Soundwave loomed. "I am not always inclined to give him what he desires."

"You-!"

Soundwave moved with lightening speed and seized the chair. Starscream held fast, and in doing so finally tore the leg off. Soundwave threw the rest of the broken pieces behind him. They smashed into smaller splinters when they hit the bulkhead. Starscream was quick to swing the leg at him, but Soundwave caught that too in one powerful fist and used it to yank him closer.

Starscream went to scramble back, heels catching against the decking and making him stumble. Soundwave took him by the wrist, grip punishing, and nudged the muzzle of a warm hand-held blaster against his neck.

"You won't kill me." Starscream whispered, wincing at the pressure of the gun against sensitive cables. "It'll upset your precious leader."

"Not kill." Soundwave twisted the gun, then drew it back and pressed it against the flat armour of Starscream's wing. "Maim."

Starscream stopped fighting, squirming slightly in Soundwave's grip, looking down and away from the overwhelming stare of his visor. The punishing grip on his wrist lessened, and Starscream saw the Decepticon's comm link light up out of the corner of his optics.

Then Megatron's rough voice was speaking through it.

"*Soundwave*," his rasp was harsher for how stressed and breathless he seemed. "*You have him?*"

"Affirmative." Soundwave responded, visor fixed on Starscream. "He is uninjured. I am bringing him to you now."

The speaker crackled loudly with Megatron's sigh, his relief seeping through the comm line. Starscream's spark twisted unpleasantly.

"*Good. Keep him that way.*"

The line clicked off.

Starscream chewed on the mesh of his inner cheek. "Nice guilt trip."

"Your options have run out." Soundwave said loudly, clearly not at all amused by any of this. "You

will comply and return to the *Nemesis*, or you will meet your end here. A traitors death at hands of your own 'friends'."

Starscream pulled a face. "Look, spare parts, I don't know what Megatron's told you-!"

"Lord Megatron has informed me of a great deal." Soundwave intoned, and patience clearly wearing thin, started dragging Starscream out into the corridor before he'd even confirmed he would comply. "He has great expectations regarding you."

Starscream wanted to dig his thrusters in and hinder his own kidnapping, but Soundwave's weapon knocked his wing again, and the only thing worse than getting dragged off to the *Nemesis* was get dragged off to the *Nemesis's* medics. He stumbled along, keeping an optic out for any lingering Autobot who might be brave enough to rescue him.

"His expectations are deluded." He scoffed. "I told him I wasn't going to be one of his pet Decepticons."

"Not as a Decepticon." Soundwave took his visor off the corridor ahead of them to give him a stern look.

Starscream tripped over his own pedes, "Then what does he want me for?!"

Megatron had sense enough too know Starscream wasn't going to be happy, but their options were limited now. He didn't have to be a Decepticon, he didn't even have to reside on the *Nemesis* if he detested it so, but he could no longer play Prime's loyal little Autobot.

Megatron couldn't make his own escape without taking Starscream with him.

He was filled with nervous expectation as he waited at the human ship port, lingering after the other Decepticons had flown out to sea just to be sure Soundwave and Starscream made it to the shore unfollowed. Refuelled and now armed, he'd be more than capable of warding off Autobots seeking to separate him from his paramour.

If Starscream was willing to let him, that was.

He didn't have to wait as long as he feared. Soundwave appeared on the horizon, leading a slouching, ambling seeker by the wrist. Megatron lifted his chin, spark warming and growing in it's chamber.

He crossed the dock to meet them, knocking aside a crane and letting a smile pull at his lips, even when all Starscream did was return a scowl.

"Lord Megatron-" Soundwave began, before falling silent when Starscream tore himself free of his grasp with unnecessary bluster, and then stumbled forward to shove Megatron.

Surprised, Megatron stumbled back against the crane, his weight curving the metal.

"Desist." Soundwave ordered when Starscream raised a fist to slap him.

Starscream ignored him, but Megatron didn't need any assistance. He knocked the incoming slap aside and caught Starscream by the wing, reeling him in and tucking him close, trapping his arms

between their chests. "Starscream-"

"No-" Starscream struggled to slap him again, denta clenched furiously and optics bright with emotion, "I don't want-!"

Megatron held him tighter, "I'm sorry."

"This is all your fault!" Starscream wriggled violently, his digits jabbing into the seams of his plating viscously.

Megatron ignored the pinching, stabbing sensation, trying to rub up and down his back. "I know."

Starscream swore at him and continued to fight, muttering half formed threats and insults, and Megatron weathered it all, listening as his harsh, furious intakes shuttered into weak despairing gasps. He couldn't hold him any tighter without hurting him, so he dropped his forehead to the top of Starscream's helm, trying to rub away the stiffness from his tensing frame.

Optics shuttered so he wouldn't have to look at him. Starscream let his helm fall forward and knocked it against Megatron's chest with a little tap. Soundwave waited beside a cargo ship, staring down at the murky water.

Finally, Starscream slumped in defeat, his weight tipping forward into Megatron and arms coming up to loosely return the embrace.

"What do I do now?" He whispered quietly.

Megatron was unsure if the question had been directed at him. He kept his nose pressed against the top of Starscream's helm, nuzzling briefly.

"Come back with me." He said, and this time it was a plea, not a demand.

Starscream rolled his helm back to meet his gaze, optics startlingly blue. He shrugged lazily. "Not like I have anywhere else to go..."

Optimus surveyed the furniture strewn across the empty interrogation room, trying to decipher for himself what had happened.

A difficult task indeed when there were so many opinions being shouted in his audials.

"-don't like throwing 'round the word 'traitor', but we gotta look at the facts!" Ironhide was shaking his helm.

"What facts?!" Ratchet interjected, shouldering his way through the doorway. "The only facts we have here are that he's gone."

"There was a fight..." Jazz added, helm tilting at the mess.

"Easily staged." Prowl glared, kicking a stray chair leg. "And from what you've reported, Jazz-"

"Oh, who cares!" Ratchet yelled. "Why are we still standing around like a bunch of write-offs when one of our own has been abducted his own base?!"

"You're greatly misinformed." Prowl began again.

"Prowlers gotta point, man," Jazz nodded sagely. "There's a lotta evidence to say our 'loyal little star' was having... an *affair* with ole bucket-head."

Optimus felt a wave of exhaustion wash over him hearing the accusation spoken aloud. They'd all known; from the moment they'd dragged a subdued Megatron out of Starscream's quarters it'd all finally started adding up. The secretive behaviour, the strange disappearances, the deterioration in productivity.

Worse of all... it looked like this had been going on for some time.

"I don't care if he was clanging the Unmaker himself!" Ratchet's sudden bellow snapped him out of his thoughts.

He glanced at his medic in surprise, taken aback by his furious defense as much as the rest of his command.

Prowl, at least, tried to hold his ground. "Starscream has-

"-Done something stupid. What else is new?" Ratchet folded his arms and looked between them all like a disappointed creator. "You're going to abandon him to *them*, because you *think* he's done something wrong-

"We know he's-

"The only thing you *know*, is that they took him." Ratchet's optics were steely blue, his mouth a firm hard line. He looked to Optimus next, his gaze unrelenting. "He's just a stupid kid."

Optimus's spark withered.

"Ratchet is correct." He decided, and the flabbergasted faces of his command all turned to him next. Prowl looked one more unexpected statement away from calling it a day and shutting himself down. "Megatron cannot be allowed to keep Starscream. Whatever has happened, whatever he has done, he remains an Autobot."

"You sure 'bout that?" Jazz's lips curved.

Optimus wasn't, but Starscream had been at his side long enough to earn a little blind faith.

Starscream's initial despair and resentment was soon overshadowed with anxiety when he stepped foot in the Decepticon base as not as a prisoner, but as a *guest*, for the first time. Back straight, wing and nose up, he did everything he could to project an aura of cool superiority.

Which was rather difficult to do when he had Megatron looming over him every step of the way, outright refusing to allow more than a few metres of space to exist between them. Starscream was growing ever closer to whipping around and snapping at him to back off, but every time he glanced up and looked into Megatron's lined old face, the urge withered.

He wasn't attacked on sight like unwanted vermin by the few Decepticons milling about the flight hanger. He assumed they had been the thugs who raided the *Ark* to free their leader, so they must

have been informed of his situation, though their curious stares told him they didn't know quite everything yet.

They reached the exit and stepped into the corridor outside the hanger. Megatron touched his shoulder vent in a subtle gesture to indicate which direction he should turn- like he couldn't remember where Megatron's quarters were from last time- when his path was suddenly blocked by a black and purple blur of a lunatic.

"Are we keeping him?" Skywarp suddenly had an arm flung across his shoulders, heavy and close, and Starscream was all ready to punch him in the cockpit before he realised he wasn't being strangled but... embraced.

"I'm not something to be *kept*." He shoved the filthy Decepticons seeker away with a hiss anyway.

Skywarp scowled at him, looking petulantly between him and his leader. "Touchy."

"No decisions have been made yet." Megatron moved between them swiftly, taking Starscream by the shoulder in a grip firm enough to remind him that he was a guest here, and agitating his hosts wasn't the best of ideas.

Skywarp's bright optics continued to flick between them both calculatingly, before he huffed and moved off. Starscream peered around Megatron's broad frame to watch him go.

"What was that?" He asked, walking again when Megatron nudged him onwards.

Megatron looked at him with an odd expression on his face, and Starscream cursed himself for having forgotten he was supposed to be giving him the silent treatment.

"There are an uneven number of seekers." Megatron explained.

"So?"

"Skywarp and Thundercracker are missing a trine-mate."

Starscream dug his heels in. "No."

"I said no decisions-"

"No 'decisions have been made' but your flying thugs are already trying to tie me into their prehistoric ménage!"

"It's natural for a seeker to trine-"

"Why are *you* telling *me* what it's natural for a seeker to do?" Starscream grumped. "You're so condescending."

"I've been around more seekers than you." Some irritation was starting to seep into Megatron's tone. "Perhaps spending time with them will do you some good."

"I have no intention of spending any time with anyone here."

Megatron sighed heavily. "I never would have guessed..."

Starscream reinstated his silent treatment after that, letting Megatron steer him towards the command quarters and answering his comments and questions in little more than uppity huffs and scathing glares.

When they finally reached his rooms, Starscream headed straight for the berth and threw himself in amongst the pillows in as dramatic a display as he could manage.

His face pressed into them, he listen to Megatron move about the room for a while, rifling through draws and clattering things about. Eventually the berth dipped on one side and Starscream felt a large presence hover over him.

"I'm needed in the command centre." Megatron spoke, and Starscream felt a servo fall to his knee. "Will you be alright here till I return?"

Starscream rolled his optics unseen. Wonderful, no longer a prisoner, he was now being treated like an unaccompanied minor. He was surprised he wasn't being assigned a babysitter.

"I'll be fine." He mumbled into the pillow.

Megatron didn't need to know that he had no intention of actually staying in the room.

Megatron wasn't the least bit surprised to see Optimus's Prime's stern face on the communicator when he arrived in the command centre.

"Why did you take him, Megatron?" Prime's timbre rattled the speakers, but he sounded exhausted, rather than angry. "What is he to you?"

Megatron picked his words carefully. "How do you mean, Prime?"

"We know you've been meeting with him." Prime said firmly. "But there is little evidence to suggest he is your spy."

"He is not my spy." Megatron kept his answers short and to the point. "And much to my dismay, neither is he a traitor to your cause."

"Then why take him and not Jazz? Who was unconscious and at your mercy, and as chief saboteur would have been a far more desirable captive for information?"

Megatron rolled his optics at the extent of denial Prime expressing, reaching for the disconnect switch. "Because he wouldn't have been Starscream."

There was just enough time for him to revel in the confused distress crossing Prime's masked face before the screen went black.

Chapter 7

Megatron wouldn't be pleased to discover Starscream wandering through the *Nemesis's* dank halls alone, which was precisely why he was doing it. It was dark, expected of a base sitting a half-mile under water, and surprisingly warm. For once Starscream didn't have to tuck his wings close to keep away the cold as he did on the *Ark*, where he could never win the argument to turn the heating up against an entire faction of ground pounders that never seemed to feel the chill.

Part of him wanted to start a fight, cause trouble with Megatron's loyal lug-nuts just to make everything about the situation as difficult as possible. But the Decepticons were making it harder for him to stir up animosity than Autobot propaganda had led him to believe.

He knocked his shoulder into Astrotrain when he passed the curious triple-changer, but against the larger mech's greater frame it didn't sway him much. Astrotrain kept walking, snickering quietly to himself and shaking his head like Starscream was some unruly mechling.

Starscream stared after him and fumed.

He could have had the decency to at least insult him.

Megatron had obviously already swept through his ranks with threats regarding him. Not only was he being borderline ignored, but those few interesting areas of the base he managed to stumble upon were locked down and sealed at his approach- a cassette dropped out of a ceiling vent and slapped the door lock before he could so much as poke his helm into one of the war rooms, then some panicked looking combiner mech tripped over themselves to overtake him before he reached the armoury.

Starscream wouldn't be surprised if he later learned Megatron as watching him *right now* on the security cameras, like some weird stalker.

Stewing to himself, he gave it up as a lost cause and began heading back in the direction of Megatron rooms, thinking even if he couldn't recall the way the lurking Decepticons would be only too happy to redirect him.

Since they were all so 'friendly'.

He was right in not being able to recall the way. He soon stepped through one surprisingly unlocked doorway and into what looked like an overcrowded recreation room. The droning noise and laughter died when dozens of identical faces turned to look at him, a sea of wings flicking with interest.

Starscream's mood sunk further. He'd managed to blunder right into the airforce's rec-room, and now he had a room full of the seekers who delighted in knocking him out of the air on a weekly basis staring back at him.

Well, he had been looking for a fight.

Before he could concoct some snide comment to throw out and provoke them all, the air beside him shifted. He nearly jumped out of his armour when a large black seeker was invading his personal space.

"He let you out?" Skywarp (of course it was the annoying one) was grinning at him with eager mischievousness.

"No, I left of my own accord!" Starscream snarled, backing away and bumping his wings into another seeker behind him.

Thundercracker. The blue seeker was up and frowning at him, optics tracking down his frame with far too much concentration to be polite.

"Do you *mind*?"

"You're not hurt?" Thundercracker's deep voice murmured, gentler and more natural than Starscream could ever recall his menacing vocaliser being in battle. "We heard-?"

"He's *fine*, Thunder." Skywarp's grin slipped into a scowl. He nudged Starscream, rough enough to cause him to stumble. "Tell him you're fine."

Starscream felt like flapping his arms about to make them give him some space. Trapped between the two of them and not unaware of the other seekers closing in the air felt like it was thickening.

"I'd be better if I wasn't surrounded by you-"

"So you defected?" One of the unfortunately cone-headed seekers was trying to peer over Thundercracker's broad wing to take a look at him.

"No I-"

"He was kidnapped," Thundercracker growled, nudging the cone-head back with his blocky shoulder. "Stop breathing on me Ramjet-"

"He wasn't kidnapped, he's not in handcuffs." Skywarp folded his arms obstinately. Again, he nudged Starscream. "Tell him you weren't kidnapped."

Starscream wobbled and caught himself against Thundercracker's chest, then veered away in disgust, wiping his servo against the bulkhead and tucking his wings close to keep them clear of his surrounding enemies. "Do that *one* more time-"

"Stop putting words in his mouth, Skywarp." Thundercracker spoke over him, completely missing the irony. "Let him talk."

"I-"

"Does it really matter anyway?!" Another seeker snorted, appearing behind Skywarp and giving him a distasteful look. Starscream felt indignity flare. "He's just an Autobot, who cares what Megatron does to him?"

"I don't care what he is." Thundercracker's previously soothing timbre was suddenly it's deep menacing battle-bark again, and in stepping up to the other seeker, he squashed Starscream closer to Skywarp again. "I don't condone it, even from Megatron-"

Squashed and confused, Starscream had finally had enough. He pushed out both servos to shove Skywarp and Thundercracker away and give himself room to breathe. "Condone *what*?!"

The seekers blinked at him, then collectively looked at Thundercracker. Starscream followed their gaze.

"...Why did Megatron bring you back here?" Thundercracker asked.

Starscream rolled his optics. "Because he's a sentimental sack of scrap metal and has deluded himself

into thinking I'd make a good Decepticon."

There was a great release of breath, a couple laughs, a lot of mechs shaking their helms. Skywarp reached past him and punched Thundercracker in the arm, "*I told you* Megatron doesn't rape prisoners."

Starscream's optics reset, blinking in surprise between them. "You thought-"

Skywarp slung an arm over his shoulder, and in Starscream's befuddlement, he forgot to shove the miscreant away as he was lead towards the worn sofa; already fairly over occupied. Skywarp tugged him down with him so they were all sandwiched together, Thundercracker falling to his other side, almost on top of him.

Starscream squirmed but quickly found they'd managed to trap him. Before he could voice a protest Thundercracker was pushing a cube into his servo, and having not sufficiently refuelled for some time now, Starscream begrudgingly accepted it, taking a tentative sip.

It *tasted* poison-free.

"You're not bad for an Autobot, ya know," Skywarp leant back against the sofa (pinging Starscream with his wing in the process) and smirked at him, "or... a not-Autobot, or whatever you are now."

Starscream looked away angrily, not wanting to think about the faction and friends he had left behind, of what Skyfire was going to think when he found out...

He looked around the overcrowded, noisy, wing-filled rec-room and shrank further among those on the sofa, against Thundercracker and Skywarp.

"I don't belong here."

Skywarp's arm around him squeezed with boisterous camaraderie. "And here i was thinking you belonged just fine."

Megatron retuned to his rooms some time later to find Starscream sitting cross-legged in the centre of his berth. He paused by the door, dropping a file to his desk. "Have fun?"

Starscream lifted his helm and stuck his olfactory in the air, "No. I haven't left the room."

"I've been in the command centre." Megatron sighed. "There are cameras in there. You seemed to be getting along rather well with my airforce?"

He'd been pleased to see it, once his initial concern at seeing them all mob around his lover faded. It had soon become clear Skywarp and Thundercracker taken to Starscream rather well. Soundwave had been right in calculating them as a good match.

"They held me there against my will." Starscream glared. "And I'm insulted that you thought I'd trine with those idiots..."

That Starscream, at actual seeker, wasn't aware Thundercracker and Skywarp had already begun their official trining courtship with him, just went to show how out of touch Starscream had fallen with his own heritage in holing himself up with those Autobots all these millennia. He let it be

though, Starscream was in a sensitive enough state without him about to lecture him over his own culture.

He removed a polishing rag from his subspace and gave his armour a superficial clean, approaching the berth. "Prime called."

Starscream's helm lifted, optics filled with hope. "He did?"

"He wants you back." Megatron sighed, tucking his rag back into his subspace and sitting on the edge of the berth.

"Why," Starscream crawled over to kneel beside him. "To make an example of me?" He asked dejectedly.

"I'd never let that happen." Megatron touched his soft, dark cheek.

Starscream slapped him away. "Maybe I should go back."

Megatron thought his audials were malfunctioning. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. "...what?"

"Prime won't execute me." Starscream said stubbornly. "I know he won't. Not if I just, if I tell him the truth and accept his punishment-"

"They'll lock you away, at best." Megatron hissed, scrambling to take Starscream's servos and pull him in.

"Not *forever*."

"And then what?!" Megatron shook him, "they're not going to let us see each other-"

Starscream looked away furiously, biting his bottom lip. "I don't know what to do."

"Don't leave me." Megatron told him. He didn't have a solution but, "Just don't leave me, Starscream."

Starscream huffed, the wings bearing his faded red insignias drooping. Megatron squeezed his servo, not knowing how else to offer comfort. The berth shifted when Starscream began to move in, shuffling on his knees until Megatron let him climb into his lap. He wrapped his arms around Starscream's middle and let his chin rest atop his helm. His engine purred with the comfort of their closeness.

Starscream shuddered in his arms.

"Are you cold?" He asked, thinking it was probably his duty to at least ensure Starscream was as comfortable as possible. And he knew seekers were prone to the cold.

Starscream made a vague noise against his neck and shifted. Megatron felt his upturned nose nuzzle between the cables and sniff.

After a moment Starscream leant back and looked at Megatron, his glistening optics hard and annoyed again. "Do you have wash-racks down here?"

Megatron arched a brow. "Yes?"

"Good." Starscream slapped his shoulder and climbed off him. "Because you need one."

Megatron frowned, thinking of the rub down he'd just given himself. "I just-"

"Come," Starscream wrapped his dainty servo around the first two of his thick digits and tugged. "You can teach me how to use them."

A wash-rack was a wash-rack whatever faction's base it was in, so Megatron assumed it wasn't really a *lesson* Starscream was after in the wash racks. He followed eagerly.

Starscream appeared pleasantly surprised when presented with the wash-racks. Megatron wondered what he had worked himself up to expect? Seawater instead of solvent? A swamp instead of clean tile and working drainage?

"This will do." Starscream nodded acceptingly, tapping the on switch and lifting a palm to test the temperature and consistency of the solvent. Armour damp, he rubbed the tips of his digits together, working the cycle's dirt from the tiny intricate seams and struts of his digits.

Megatron watched him adjust the pressure and temperature -both higher than he would normally allow- and steam began to rise up from the jet of solvent. Starscream shot him a look, then stepped under it, helm lifting and optics offlining with a pampered sigh of relief. He ran his servos up over his helm and down the back of his neck, letting them linger on his shoulder vents when he onlined his optics again and looked at Megatron.

His sultry, angled poise slumped with exasperation, his helm tipping to the side. "Are you just going to stand there?"

Realising he was supposed to be doing more than stood oogling Starscream, Megatron cleared his vocaliser and straightened, moving in assuredly to take full hips (armour warmed by the solvent) and turn Starscream to make room for himself.

His systems warmed with anticipation of the warm, wet mischief to come. He dropped a kiss to the edge of Starscream's wing, smiling when it twitched, ready to do it again and more, when Starscream twisted in his grasp.

And instead of throwing himself at him, as Megatron would have expected of his youthful frisky paramour, Starscream slapped him in the face with a sodden wash cloth.

"My wings." He ordered when the rag fell off Megatron's face and into his waiting servos. "Do a good job and I'll think about it."

Megatron lifted the rag dutifully, twirling a digit to indicate Starscream should turn around again, calculating, as he scrubbed down broad wings, just how much grovelling he was going to have to do to win back Starscream's favour.

He did a good enough job and Starscream allowed him his boon, but something was missing.

At first Megatron feared the passion had left their relationship right along with its secrecy. Had that excitement they'd felt for one another just been the rush of the thrill? The threat of being caught? He had Starscream pinned beneath his bulk in as adventurous a position as ever, but still it was lacking.

Then he looked into Starscream's miserable, sulking face and decided that might have had something to do with the lack of enthusiasm.

He shifted and let one of Starscream's legs down from his shoulder. Starscream blinked himself out of his trance, surprised that he'd stopped. "What's wrong?"

Megatron eased himself out of Starscream and sat back on his pedes with a sigh. Starscream sat up himself, legs closing self-consciously.

Megatron looked away, frustration warring with guilt and worry. Starscream was unhappy, and though it had only been one cycle, he would continue to be unhappy. And Megatron had no guarantee that there would be an improvement. Starscream was stubborn, and made himself difficult to befriend, and Megatron feared that he might not find a place for himself here at all.

And as odd as it was, he felt he cared about whether Starscream was happy here, more than how happy *he* was to have Starscream with him.

"Megatron?" Starscream called him out of his musing, tone bordering on whining. "I'm tired, can we just finish this and recharge?"

Megatron shook his helm, but knew outright saying 'you don't have to do this just because I want to' or 'I'm not going to continue if you're not enjoying it' would only rile Starscream up into indignant denials and result in an argument that would lead to perhaps the least satisfying frag either of them had ever had.

"Perhaps I want to hold you." He said instead.

Starscream's expression softened, but he shifted away, lips pressing down to hide a growing smile, "Don't tell me you're a *hugger*-"

"Come here..." Megatron started crawling towards him. Starscream shuffled to the edge of the berth with a put-upon snort, one leg raised in a threat to kick. Megatron dodged it easily and pulled Starscream closer by the leg, scrambling over him and flattening him with his weight. Starscream huffed- but it sounded more like an escaped laugh.

"You're an embarrassment," Starscream lamented, but didn't fight the arms Megatron snaked around his middle. "All this time I thought you were a menacing Decepticon warlord."

"Why, aren't Decepticon warlords allowed to hold the mechs they care about?" Megatron's voice was muffled where he'd tucked his face as close as he could get to Starscream's wings, nibbling denta tickling the sensors.

Starscream didn't respond though, and Megatron drew his face out to meet his optics. He was blinking with bright searching optics, lips parted.

"What is it?" He murmured, rising to see him better.

Starscream followed him, surging up to kiss him -the first kiss they'd shared since they'd been caught. Megatron felt a weight rise from him at that realisation, freeing up his spark to soar. Starscream cupped his jaw and guided him through it, his hips circling up.

At the brush of their exposed arrays, Megatron grunted, his spike stirring and pressing against the plating of Starscream's hip. Still kissing, Starscream reached between them and found it, giving it a luxurious feeling stroke, his polished armour and fine digits silky and smooth on Megatron's sensitive protometal. Megatron felt Starscream guide him back to his valve, rubbing the damp tip between damper mesh. Megatron rolled his hips forward, nudging himself back inside.

Callipers relaxed then cycled down, creating a fluttering like sensation on his spike. He broke free of the kiss to moan and hiss through his denta. He pressed close to Starscream, pleasuring him with hitching, rolling, grinding motions, letting their forehelms rest together, their shuttered optics locked.

Starscream breathed something against his lips.

"What?" Megatron focused his audials, grinding in circles to reach that sensor that kept Starscream shivering.

"I won't leave you." Starscream said more clearly, his optics blinking on and off with building charge. "I won't. I won't."

Megatron silenced him with a kiss, moving faster, more desperately. Starscream was whining into his mouth, his thighs pressing against Megatron's hips, his frame tensing.

"Starscream," he moaned against his mouth.

Overload blew through Starscream, and it didn't take Megatron long to follow.

Paradoxical though it was, Starscream was comfortable for his discomfort. The berth was not his own and not exactly to his liking- too firm, too cool, too unfamiliar- but the weight across his back, the hot breath on his wings, the gentle rumble of a snoring giant? They more than made up for it.

Feeling not unlike he had overindulged his vices a bit too much last night, Starscream dragged his face out of the pillow and squinted through the darkness at the mech next to him. Megatron. Recharging.

As intimate as they'd been with each other in the past months, they'd never actually recharged together, and Starscream's curiosity rose above his desire to return to a carefree dream state.

Megatron's arm was thrown possessively across his lower back, and it slipped down further with a heavy scrape of metal on metal when Starscream rose to peer at Megatron above the rising lumps of dishevelled insulation covers. Megatron's face had relaxed out of its usual scowl and, offline, his optics did little to hide the tiny marks of aged derma around them. He slept on his back, helm to the side with one arm thrust under a pillow, sprawled out and undignified and despite his advanced age, there was something juvenile in it.

Starscream nudged the arm off his back.

Megatron's optics flicked online one at a time. Struggling with consciousness, he made a vague sleepy noise that might have been Starscream's name.

"Stay on your side." Starscream told him, curling his limbs up and tucking the insulation sheets about him more securely, dragging a fair portion of them away from Megatron and exposing his broad,

blocky chest.

"My berth." Megatron grunted, a big black fist seized a handful of the sheets draped over Starscream's shoulder and pulled back.

Starscream wasn't relinquishing warmth so easily, and he was not used to sharing. He held fast, and soon found himself, the sheets and all, being dragging into Megatron's arms. Servos worked under the covers and Starscream squirmed and fussed when air-chilled digits brushed his warm sensitive spots.

"No, idiot! You're cold!"

"Because you have all the blankets."

A digit -perhaps the coldest so far- touched the underside of his left wing and sent an unpleasant shock of sensation shooting through the entire appendage. Starscream squeaked.

Megatron's boisterous laugh seemed to shake the entire berth.

Starscream had always wondered what it would be like waking up to someone beside him...

Megatron was no different to Optimus when it came to self-discipline. As much as Starscream asked and argued and begged and tugged, Megatron left the berth to ready himself for a day of regular duties, professional and stern and irritatingly resolved.

"What's the point of being a Decepticon if you're going to play by the rules?" Starscream asked him from the cocoon he'd made himself out of the sheets. "You're the boringest warlord I've ever met."

Megatron seemed tempted to argue about how many other boring warlords Starscream had supposedly met, but again, he summoned the self restraint not to sink to his level. "Some rules should remain unbroken."

"The fun ones." Starscream tucked the insulation sheets up under his nose, slyly inhaling that patented Megatron-smell.

"Are you smelling those?"

Starscream dropped them down again, arranging his expression into one of polite innocence. "No."

Megatron didn't seem to believe him. He scooped up the work he'd dumped on the desk the night before and waited by the door, expression expectant.

Starscream's optics brightened, "You'll allow me to accompany you?"

"No. But I'm still unsure of trusting a mech wearing an Autobot badge to shadow my daily route. I'm handing you over to Skywarp."

Starscream's tanks, empty of fuel, now filled with dread. "*Hand me over?*"

"Skywarp has offered to give you a tour of the base. You'll be fine. I trust him better than most."

Starscream didn't like the fondness creeping into Megatron's tone. He also didn't appreciate the idea of being given a tour like some sort of visiting dignitary. Yesterday told him most Decepticons (and probably all now) knew he was here specifically because he was the Autobot that clanged their commander.

(Was still clanging their commander.)

Which made him even less comfortable knowing his inner thighs were still marred with little grey and black scuffs. Not to mention how little he appreciated this Skywarp-lunatic's penchant for invading his personal space.

But wherever he went outside this room there would be Decepticons, and he wasn't sitting around in here all day.

"Fine." He shrugged the sheets off his shoulders and wings, hurriedly rubbing at one of the more telling smears as he rose. "But don't expect me to be impressed by this leaking, barnacle ridden husk."

For years Starscream had allowed himself to sink into an assumption that Decepticons were different. Different in a manner that stretched beyond the simple political view it had once been. Propaganda and war and resentment did that, he supposed.

"You can take centre." Skywarp offered, taking his shoulders and moving him next to Thundercracker as they waited for the tower to ascend above sea level. "Smallest in the middle."

Starscream bristled, but a glance at Skywarp's face showed no malice. He was smaller than the Decepticon brutes, and from what Starscream could remember about flying in formation, centre meant lead.

To think how much time he wasted fronting around the Aerialbots, reminding them who was in charge, and here these Decepticons were giving him authority freely.

"You're after my manoeuvres." He accused.

Thundercracker made a low approving noise. "Well, they *are* good manoeuvres."

Starscream didn't appreciate how likeable these two were.

"Come on," Skywarp slapped him on the back, shocking the air from Starscream's vents. "We'll be the only ones up."

"Why is that?" Starscream ran a pre-flight check on his frame before allowing his thrusters to warm.

"No one bothers getting up to run drills."

"What?" Starscream watched the tower doors open outwards and reveal the blue on blue of endless ocean against clear summer sky. "Who is your air commander?"

"Me n' Thunder are co-commanders." Skywarp shrugged.

"Well you're bad at it." Starscream huffed, and took off, leaving them in his slipstream as he soared high into the air before rolling into a smooth transformation. He watched his rippling reflection in the water below, the sun glistening off his armour.

Low rumbles closed in from either side, and soon two dark shadows joined his reflection. Starscream rather liked the look of the larger seekers at his side. He looked brighter, sharper beside them. Curious, he banked a sharp left, cutting Thundercracker off.

Thundercracker rolled to avoid him and corrected, his field flaring with amusement. Starscream was surprised the move hadn't knocked him out of the air. By now he would have had a hundred spitting curses over the open comm line from the Aerialbots about being a reckless jerk.

Something passed directly under him, a tail wing brushing his under belly. He pulled up with a screech, wobbling precariously when a laugh burst over his receiving comm line. Skywarp lingered in front of him, wriggling playfully.

"What the pit are you doing?!" Starscream snarled, defensively aware of how close Thundercracker had fallen to his side.

Skywarp barrel rolled before falling back into formation. "*Playing?*"

"Playing?" Starscream echoed.

Decepticons... played?

His wing was knocked and in turning to avoid Skywarp's space-invading mischief, Starscream bumped into Thundercracker, who nudged him back again before blasting forwards with a fierce burst of flame. Skywarp whooped and followed, leaving Starscream rattled and confused in their wake.

Thundercracker shot high into the sky, Skywarp on his tail, twisting and rolling and trying to kill each other from what Starscream could tell. Thundercracker turned back and headed his way, twisting at the last minute, both of them rumbling with amusement.

They were playing tag.

"C'mon Star," Skywarp hailed him, familiar and jovial. "You're the fastest!"

He was the fastest, and a bizarre childish urge to prove so rose in Starscream. They were in the middle of an endless blue desert, the tower having long descended back into the ocean. It wasn't like anyone was going to see. And these two buffoons needed putting back into their place.

With a burst of ignition and he took off after them, quickly gaining, using every inch of his agility to match their twists and turns. Over the comm Skywarp laughed.

Starscream might have had a private snicker or two himself too.

"We are willing to negotiate for Starscream's return."

What should have been good news for any Autobot, was more conflicting for Megatron. He looked

into Prime's severe face. "And if this prisoner is not up for negotiation?"

"He will be taken back by any means necessary."

Megatron wasn't going to let that happen. Prime could have this base torpedoed into a shipwreck, but he wasn't taking Starscream back simply to punish him for daring to step outside Prime's idea of a perfect little Autobot.

Knowing him well enough to read his frown, Prime sighed, his deep timbre straining the comm console's speakers. He laid large servos down in view of the camera pick-up, clasping them together. *"He doesn't belong down there."* He rumbled. *"He has friends here. Friends who miss him deeply."*

Megatron sneered. "He's not alone here."

Prime didn't look convinced. *"Allow me to speak with him."*

"So you can manipulate him into returning to you?"

Prime's gaze darkened. *"So I can be sure **you** are not manipulating him into staying."*

"Starscream is here on his own free will." Megatron's voice began to rise with his temper.

"From what we can tell he was taken by force." Prime's baritone rose to match his.

Megatron armour heckled. "I had to ensure his safety-"

"You took him against his will," Prime accused.

"Starscream is a guest. Granted, it took some persuasion to get him here, but you know as well as I do that he doesn't always know what's best for him."

"Doesn't know what's best for him?" Prime's optics bore into Megatron's very spark. *"Listen to yourself Megatron. He is still your **prisoner**."*

Megatron waved a servo, gesturing for Soundwave to end the communication, "Enough of this nonsense-"

"Prove me wrong, Megatron." Prime cut in. *"Let me speak with my mech."*

"He's not yours anymore." Megatron snarled, and crossed the room to turn Prime off himself.

The screen blinked off, and Soundwave's visor tilted up towards him.

Megatron snorted, "Don't you start."

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Thundercracker couldn't quite meet Megatron's optics when they stumbled into his command quarters some hours after he and Skywarp had promised to return with their charge. At least *he* had the grace to look ashamed. Skywarp wasn't in much better shape than Starscream, who was currently hung between the two larger seekers, his thrusters at odd angles and hardly taking his own weight.

Starscream flashed a lopsided grin when Megatron stood aside to permit them entry. Thundercracker ducked his helm so his chin was near touching his chest.

"This doesn't look like a 'drink or two' to me." Megatron commented, but couldn't muster much more than exasperation at the state they'd gotten Starscream into when they'd obviously had such a good time. Trine courtships could be such tricky things, and he didn't want to unbalance anything, not when a relationship between the three of them would work so well in his favour.

"Sorry, sir." Thundercracker murmured softly, and the drag of his vowels told Megatron he was only *just* sober enough to be sheepish.

Skywarp was suffering from no such disposition.

"I think we're in *trouble*~" he snickered into Starscream's audial, nose and lips bumping the sensitive components and making Starscream squirm. "We kept you out past curfew..."

"I don't *have* a curfew," Starscream proclaimed sassily, trying (and failing) to get his pedes under himself and stand up a little straighter as Thundercracker fought against the gravity of his stumbling companions to get them all moving in a straight line. "I'm a *free agent*!"

"I wish!" Skywarp proclaimed, and hindering Thundercracker more, hitched Starscream up so he was wobbling on the tips of his thrusters and planted a rough, sloppy kiss on him- glossa and all.

"Warp!" Thundercracker cried, knees buckling when Starscream fell back against him and he was supporting the weight of both seekers.

Skywarp broke free with a snort of laughter, his arm still looped around Starscream's back. Between them Starscream blinked in surprise, looking more confused than annoyed. An endearingly innocent look on him.

Skywarp must have thought so too, because he made a whining noise of want and tried to sweep him into a second kiss.

Megatron thrust an arm between them and pulled Starscream out of the firing line, "That's enough now, Skywarp. You're not claiming him tonight."

Skywarp pulled the sort of face no Decepticon would have had to nerve to in front of their commanding officer were they sober, but Thundercracker, sensible enough to know an intoxicated trine-claiming wasn't a good idea even under the best of circumstances, nodded and began to steer him away.

"Let's go, Warp." He said, thrusting Skywarp in the direction of the door. He fired off an awkward salute at Megatron before pressing the door controls.

"-but I don't wanna wait!" Skywarp could be heard complaining, his helm lolling back and craning to steal one last glance at Starscream before he was tugged away.

The door whispered shut on his complaints, and Megatron looked down into the face of his own befuddled, frowning seeker. He gave Starscream an encouraging nudge towards the berth. "Best you recharge some of that excess fuel off."

Starscream muttered something unintelligible under his berth and made his way over. He just about made it to the berth before tripping and landing on it face down. He exhaled loudly against the covers, and remained face down.

"Hmmmhmm..." He said.

Megatron took him by the shoulders and rolled him onto his back. His optics were offline and his mouth slightly agape. For a moment he thought Starscream had merely made a noise in his recharge.

"...Skywarp," Starscream then mumbled, flicking one wincing optic online and finding Megatron above him. "I kissed him..."

"He kissed *you*," Megatron corrected, picking up his legs and swinging them up on the berth for him.

"Hmm," Starscream flicked the optic offline again. "M' sorry."

"It's nothing to worry yourself over." Megatron waved it off, pulling the insulation sheets out from under his splayed form so he could throw them over him.

"You're jealous," Starscream kept talking. "I mean, you should be. You should be jealous."

"You're seekers. It's to be expected-"

An optic snapped online again, this time accompanied by a scowl. "Why?" Starscream drawled, suspicious and observant no matter the state of his processor. "Because we're all promis- *promiz*- because we're all *sluts*?"

"No." Megatron shook out the sheets and paused to consider him.

"Were your guardians not trined? Your friends? In your youth?"

Starscream shrugged, gathering the sheets in his arms greedily, "How should I know? Haven't been around other seekers since- since I don't know when..."

Megatron watched his optics flutter shut again, and some of the lines of frustration smoothed out. He recalled the intelligence files he had on Starscream, those he had perused before he'd known him truly. There had been little personal information. The file had been dominated by his extensive education, the courses he'd fought to earn a place on, all the academies and apprenticeships all far, *far* from Vos.

"I miss them," Starscream's soft voice broke him free of his thoughts.

"Who?"

"Everyone." Starscream turned his face away, derma around his optics pinched. "Skyfire, and those punk Aerialbot's, and all those nerds..."

"We have 'nerds' here." Megatron tried, unsure what the term meant, but surely if the Autobots had

them, they would. "And *seekers*."

"I miss Optimus," Starscream admitted with a fond sigh, turning into his pillow. "He would have... he would have lectured me for drinking, and, and threatened to brig us."

Megatron felt a knot in his throat. He couldn't seem to unclench his fists.

"But he wouldn't have." Starscream was mostly mumbling now. "Too soft..."

The corner of the insulation sheets slipped from Starscream's shoulder, exposing it. Megatron carefully pulled it back over him, listening as vents slowed and engines cycles into a soft sleeping purr as Starscream drifted off.

Starscream woke to a splitting processor ache and a mouth drier than the badlands. He was so vastly uncomfortable it took him a moment to realise the warm arms circling his chest were too small to be Megatron's.

He cracked an optic online, and his discomfort increased considerably when he discovered the owner of those arms. Skywarp.

"Urgh."

Everything smelt of stale high-grade, including Skywarp's breath, so Starscream placed his servo on the side of the seeker's vacant, drooling face and pushed. Skywarp made an unpleasant noise at the jostling, the sort that usually implied an imminent purge. Starscream scrambled away from him.

And right into Thundercracker.

"What is going on?!" He demanded, pushing away the blue seeker's helping servos and clutching his aching helm. "Where am I?"

Behind him, Skywarp had dragged the covers over his head and gone back to recharge. Thundercracker, who was on top of the covers rather than beneath them trying to *spoon him*, looked like he had been awake all night. And was suffering for it now.

"Megatron asked us to keep an- to keep you company," he amended quickly, rubbing at his optics. "He had an urgent meeting."

Starscream looked around, and realised these were indeed Megatron's quarters. It was a small comfort, considering who was in berth him. He cast a wary glance back at Skywarp. He couldn't quite recall what they'd been up to the night before, but the pressuring weight of some unknown embarrassment was growing in his chest.

He glared, "And he always allows you in his berth, does he?"

Thundercracker lifted his servos placatingly. "Technically, *I'm* not in the berth. Skywarp was tired."

"You don't say." Starscream sneered, shuffling away from the snoring lump. "What meeting? Megatron didn't mention a meeting."

"How would you know what he mentioned?" Thundercracker arched a brow, "You could barely

stand upright last night."

Starscream felt his wings flick with embarrassment. He dropped them low in hopes Thundercracker wouldn't see. Living among the Autobots he'd grown too used to allowing them open expression, no one on the *Ark* understood the subtleties of what was essentially a foreign body language. But now Thundercracker and Skywarp and all the other seekers here were reading him like an open datafile, and it was annoying.

"He'll be back soon," Thundercracker reassured him, looking away. "You should recharge a little longer."

"Great, stuck with you two." Starscream muttered, flopping down and knocking Skywarp. The lump beneath the covers made a displeased noise. "Where has he gone?"

"That's above my pay grade to say," Thundercracker smiled, and he had a soft, gentle smile -for a Decepticon. "He's off base somewhere."

Starscream didn't find that particularly reassuring. He laid back, fingering the covers and twisting the fabric around his digits. Decepticons rarely left their base lest they had an attack planned. How was he to know this 'meeting' wasn't just a smokescreen for another raid? Was Megatron out there right now, blasting his friends on an open battle field over an extra few cubes?

He twisted the covers into tight crumpled knots.

"You look a little stiff..." Thundercracker commented, watching him.

"And?" Starscream scowled. Of course he was tense. Megatron was off doing Primus-knew-what and he was stuck on the enemy base, surrounded by seekers he was growing uncomfortably close to, and therefore *hated*.

A warm servo touched the lower edge of his wing, the least sensitive corner. Starscream glanced over his shoulder vent.

"I can help with that?" Thundercracker offered, digits sliding around the edge and pinching, lightly. Starscream's tension heightened at the touch, then slipped away as skilled sensor pads massaged the section, working on one particular knot of discomfort.

"Good?"

Starscream hummed noncommittally, letting his wing rise towards the touch. The berth rocked beneath him when Thundercracker moved to straddle his hips, and fingers found the same spot on his right wing. He muffled a pleased noise into his pillow.

"I don't think anyone's treated these wings right for years," Thundercracker commented warmly, his weight resting on Starscream's lower back now. The heels of Thundercracker's servos pressed down on the hinges of his wings then pushed outwards towards the tips. Starscream arched into the sensation with an audible groan.

Best. Hangover cure. Ever.

Some hours later and they were still in the berth, and Megatron was still absent at his 'meeting'. To Starscream's great annoyance Skywarp was conscious now and talking non-stop about banal inconsequential gossip, and Thundercracker was sat in silence, frowning. He was on his private comm. Starscream knew the vacant look.

He knew they were distracting him.

As time passed memories of the night before grew in clarity. He rolled his glossa around his mouth, remembering the taste of fresh fuel on his lips, Skywarp's keen optics filling his vision.

Oh Primus, he glanced at the nattering fool beside him, they'd been all over each other.

Megatron hadn't seemed to mind. Perhaps he was... *into* that sort of thing. Or extremely patient. Starscream thought back to Megatron getting him into the berth, listening as he spouted drunken nonsense before drifting into recharge.

What had he said? Something about Prime?

He *definitely* remembered saying something about Prime.

Oh Primus, *where* was Megatron?!

"I need some air," He threw the covers back. "It's stuffy in here, especially with *you* breathing."

"Wait!" Skywarp threw all the covers to the floor when he chased after him, "Don't you want to hear what happened when Shockwave opened the space bridge?"

"Let me guess," Starscream sneered, trying to shake him off his arm, "He was showered in the glitter you'd sent in lieu of energon?"

"Yeah, but the look on his face-"

"He doesn't *have* a face," Starscream snarled, and Thundercracker must have finished whatever secret conversation he'd been having on the comm because he was following them out into the corridor, frown stern and concerned.

"Stop following me!" He threw over his shoulder.

Skywarp teleported directly in front of him and Starscream walked into his chest with a clang and splutter. Skywarp grabbed him around the middle, expression panicked like he didn't know what else to do with him. Starscream was on the verge of clawing him to death, when-

"Let him go, Warp." Thundercracker said evenly, "We've got a summons."

Released, Starscream brushed away Skywarp's touch frantically. "Oh goodie," he sneered, "Off to rape and pillage?"

Thundercracker's gaze darkened.

Starscream was saved from having to take a frightful step back when Skywarp teleported between them. "Don't say things like that," he smiled awkwardly, "And *no*, obviously. Also, you're coming."

"Where?" Starscream veered back, spark leaping at the idea of getting dragged into some fight Megatron was having with Prime so he could be dangled on a stick, used to taunt his former faction.

Was it a test? Was he going to be expected to perform some grand gesture of loyalty. To spit on

Prime and the life he had lived for four million years, or denounce his relationship with Megatron and prove that he really had been a good little Autobot all along?

He took a step back, but Skywarp's servo locked around his wrist. Tight.

"It's not gonna be bad." He said, optics focused over Starscream's shoulder, at his wings. Frustrated Starscream folded them back, forcing them to still.

"You expect me to believe a Decepticon?"

Thundercracker's heavy servo landed on his shoulder vent. "Would you believe a friend?"

It was distrust and distance that had kept Starscream alive through the worst of the war, not *friends*. He inched away.

"You can have your weapons back?" Skywarp offered.

Starscream thought about it. He could always shoot them if their deceptive natures rang true. And if his suspicions regarding Megatron were also correct, he could shoot him too.

He agreed.

Thundercracker and Skywarp corralled him into their familiar formation. Either side of him they felt like escorts rather than wing-mates, and Starscream's unease grew as the miles shot by and the landscape became familiar.

"Where are we going?" He demanded for what had to be the tenth time.

Either side Thundercracker and Skywarp were stoic and silent. He received no answer.

In the distance, he could see the peak of the *Ark's* crash sight. The sun was setting directly behind it, haloing the volcano in golden light. The tranquility of the sight did nothing to sooth Starscream's nerves. They were mere miles from crossing the perimeter line.

He tried to bank left to circle it, buy himself a little more thinking time. But Thundercracker cut him off with a furious blast of his thrusters. At the risk of being knocked out of the sky Starscream stayed the course.

Now that they were closer Starscream could see figures on the ground, only two. Hardly the welcoming party he would have expected from his former faction. Two- possibly three Decepticons entering their airspace should have created a larger scene. But then the silver armour of the second figure caught a stray beam of sunlight.

Starscream threw himself into a dive, ignoring the shouts of the seekers behind him.

He flipped into bipedal mode inches from the ground, kicking up dirt and scraping his thrusters on hard volcanic rock. The dust cleared and the two figures in front of him met his gaze. Megatron and Optimus, shoulder to shoulder.

"Starscream-" Optimus began.

"What is this?!" Starscream demanded, looking between the two, searching their armour. No injuries, no evidence of battle. He met Megatron's sombre expression. "Are you making me choose?!"

Megatron opened his mouth, "Starscream-"

"Don't lie to me!" Starscream thrust a digit at him. He heard Thundercracker and Skywarp land some way behind him. "You said being an Autobot didn't matter to you-"

"It *doesn't*-"

"-so long as I'm with you. So long as I renounce everything and everyone else?! So long as you can close your hands around me and *keep me*?"

Optimus cast a side glance at Megatron, "He has a point there."

"*Shut up, Prime*," Megatron snarled, taking a step forward, setting himself apart from his nemesis. "You've greatly misread this situation."

"Oh, of course I have," Starscream snorted. "Obviously your intentions were pure when you decided to sneak off to a secret meeting with *Prime*."

"I wouldn't say pure." Optimus interjected again.

Megatron bared his fangs at him with a growl. "You're not helping."

"I'm not trying to." Optimus said pleasantly.

"I've made a deal on your behalf." Megatron ignored Prime and turned his attention back to Starscream. "The allegations of treachery have been withdrawn, and your misdemeanours pardoned."

Dumbstruck, Starscream looked at Prime, and he could tell he was smiling behind the mask.

But... But none of it made sense. "I can come home? Just like that?"

"Well," Prime tipped his helm to the side. "There are a few conditions."

Megatron audibly groaned.

"As of this morning our warring factions have agreed to an armistice." Optimus continued, his helm held high with pride, a juxtaposition for how sour Megatron's expression was.

"*Peace?!?*" Starscream felt another wave of shock blow through him.

"I wouldn't go that far." Megatron growled. "A ceasefire. For now-"

"And negotiations to continue." Optimus finished with a nod. "Now that we have begun speaking it would be neglectful of us to stop."

Starscream had stopped listening. Dull static filled his audials. Optimus was still gesturing and talking, and Megatron was watching with a bored, peevish expression, until he caught Starscream's gaze, and smiled.

Starscream thought back to their secret meeting place, all that time ago, before any of this had happened, back when it was just them and their secret.

"*You could call a truce?*" He remembered saying, only half joking.

And Megatron laughing him off, "*I like you Starscream, but not that much.*"

"You're really doing this?" He asked Megatron, interrupting Optimus's speech. "Why?"

Megatron frowned, "I have my reasons."

"Are you ever going to share them?"

Megatron made an agitated huffing noise.

"Well, Starscream." Optimus stepped up, opening his arms and gesturing towards the *Ark* behind him. "You've a lot of friends eagerly anticipating your return."

"You expect me to believe I can just walk back in there and everything will be as it was?"

"Of course not," Optimus shook his helm. "But the Starscream I know wouldn't let that stop him."

Starscream thought of Skyfire, and the huge arms that could envelope him so effortlessly, and took a step forward.

But this spark leapt, remembering warm servos on his wings and being squashed between two cockpits. He looked back, where Thundercracker and Skywarp were stood together kicking at the ground, their wings grazing the floor. He supposed he had friends on both sides now.

And Megatron. Megatron who had made it so he could come back, even though it so obviously pained him to do so.

"I'll catch up," he told Prime, "There's something I must discuss with Megatron first."

Optimus made a low humming noise like he didn't believe there was going to be a *conversation* at all, and probably for that reason he chose to clear the area quickly, tossing only one disapproving look over his shoulder. At his retreat Thundercracker and Skywarp closed in, wings high again and smiles hopeful.

"Are you staying?!" Skywarp eagerly bounced up to him. "You chose us after all? Is the war back on?!"

Megatron brushed the eager seeker back, "No, the armistice stands."

Skywarp's wings drooped, "You don't want to be a Decepticon?"

"I never wanted to be a Decepticon." Starscream glared, but at Skywarp's dejected expression reluctantly added, "But I suppose the pair of you are passable fliers, and perhaps I do need a trine."

Skywarp made an unholy excitable noise and moved to fling himself at Starscream. Megatron threw out an arm at the last second, catching him with a frustrated hiss of, "Not *now*, Skywarp!"

Skywarp jumped back, still bouncing, clutching at Thundercracker's arm in excitement.

"Starscream and I must speak in private," Megatron told them, finally moving closer, his servo brushing Starscream's. Starscream turned his wrist and curled his digits around Megatron's, catching his servo before he could pull away.

"I will summon you if you're needed." Megatron murmured, glancing down at their joined servos.

Reluctant, but clearly sensing a brewing tension in the atmosphere, Thundercracker and Skywarp scurried away and took to the air, Skywarp throwing one last wave at Starscream transforming. Starscream rolled his optics.

"I didn't think trine-mates were *that* important " he commented.

Megatron made a vague noise and began to lead him in the direction of the forested area at the base of the volcano, where the *Ark's* security cameras wouldn't be able to see them. "Remind me to speak with you on how trine courtships work..."

"Did you really just end a four million year civil war to get me off Prime's shit-list?"

Megatron looked askance, "His *what* list?"

"Never mind," Starscream waved his question away, suddenly acutely aware of how much time he'd spent with Thundercracker and Skywarp if he had begun using human curses. "You went through an awful lot to get me out of trouble."

Megatron folded his arms, looking aloft. "Arrogant as always, Starscream. This had nothing to do with you."

Starscream sidled up to him, ignoring the steps back Megatron was taking to avoid him. "Oh really?"

Megatron didn't fold to his attempts at gaining attention. He stuck his nose in the air, sniffing, "Prime will be wondering where you are-"

"Prime knows where I am. With you." Starscream touched his forearm. Megatron turned out of his grip. Starscream glared. "So keen to be rid of me?"

"I'd rather not drag this out."

"Drag what out?" Starscream squinted at his stony expression, the tragic dim of Megatron optics; then it all made sense. He smacked Megatron's arm. "I'm not *leaving you*, you mournful old fool!"

Megatron looked confused, "Prime has welcomed you back-"

"And I'll use that invitation to collect my neglected experiments before leaving again." Starscream tutted. "Just because I can go back, doesn't mean i'll stay there."

"You said yourself you won't be pledging yourself to the Decepticons."

"*You* said I didn't have to." Starscream folded his own arms. "Will you let me back in anyway?"

"You hate my ship." Megatron was running out of petulant arguments now.

"I like *you*." Starscream smirked, because he really did. Maybe not enough to end a war, but still. "I like you a fair bit actually. When you're not being difficult, that is."

Megatron's shoulder's dropped, his aloft front slipping away. Starscream moved in closer so Megatron could reach out and touch him should he choose too.

"I suppose," he began in a low murmur, "since we are in a truce..."

Starscream stretched into the tips of his toe-pedes, but still had to pull Megatron in by the collar seam to get him low enough for the kiss he wanted to plant on him. Arms wound around his middle and tugged him in with a sharp clang as their armour met.

The kiss and the embrace both were crushing the air from Starscream's vents, sending his spark into somersaults and his helm spinning. Megatron's mouth was the very definition of conquering, glossa, denta, and lips overpowering him until he was little more than a moaning passenger getting dragged along for the ride. Megatron's servos were traversing his back, touching his wings, his aft, gripping the back of his neck and pulling him back-

Starscream gasped for breath, glossa numb and lips swollen. Megatron looked into his optics, gaze intense, as though to say something profound. Starscream clutched at his chest, listening.

Then Megatron shook his helm and started kissing him all over again. Starscream moaned, optics fluttering shut and air vents empty.

The world tilted and Starscream felt the unpleasantly slimy sensation of wet leaves under his aft. The ground was cold, but Megatron was warm on top of him, kissing him flat, pinning his wrists above his helm.

The sky darkened as the sun set, and Starscream ignored all six of Optimus's concerned comms asking for his location, right up until he received the threat of a search party.

He wobbled back to the base, Megatron waiting for him to return at the tree line. The sleazy old Decepticon didn't bother telling him he still had wet leaves stuck to his aft though, and funnily enough that was the least of what his curious comrades were asking him about when he stumbled through the *Ark's* door and into Skyfire's welcoming arms.

Treaty negotiation was excruciating, even more so for Starscream who had to sit at Prime's side like a delinquent student the teacher couldn't trust alone at the back of the class. Sitting almost directly across the table from Megatron had it's benefits though, such as being able to extend his leg under the table and brush his pede up the length of Megatron's shin.

Since he had started the week sat at Megatron's side with his servo wandering over the Decepticon's codpiece, playing a sly game of 'footsie' was rather tame for them. But if Prime caught him 'molesting the enemy' again he was going to get himself sent out the room. And then Megatron probably wouldn't have any patience to finish these negotiations.

He should probably start behaving himself.

"-and I think that's enough on that subsection for now," Prime finally lowered his datapad, and Starscream quickly withdrew his pede from between Megatron's thighs. "A break for fuel?"

Megatron stood quickly, likely close to bursting after what Starscream had just been doing. All in a rush he said, "Excellent idea, Prime. Re-adjourn in fifteen? Starscream, can I see you?"

"I was thinking closer to *ten*-" Optimus called after him, but he already had Starscream by the wrist, dragging him out into the corridor.

Megatron was on him before the door even shut, searing codpiece pressing against and warming the armour of Starscream's abdomen. His back hit the doorframe of their usual supply closet when Megatron caught him by the wings and pinned him, helm dropping to bite a cluster of throat cables with a possessive growl.

Starscream blindly searched for the door control behind him, rolling his hips forward into Megatron, want throbbing through him when he felt the armour of Megatron's codpiece fold away.

"Wait- wait-" he breathed, knocking Megatron's helm aside so he could turn and find the damn control. It whispered open and he was tripping over the threshold, crashing into knocked over supplies from their last romp here. Yesterday.

He fell back against a shelving-unit he knew was there, opening himself for Megatron. Megatron kissed him, rough and fierce, big servos grabbing and enveloping his entire aft. His spike, already wet and hard with pent up arousal from Starscream's earlier teasing, left a chilling trail over his cockpit before Megatron bent his knees and rubbed himself against his valve.

He was thick and warm and heavy. Starscream started salivating.

He lifted his pede, finding the bottom shelf of the storage unit he was leaning against and stepping up onto it. Megatron straightened, then nudged him higher, until Starscream was wobbling on the second shelf, his arms looped comfortably around Megatron's neck, their array now level with each others.

Megatron kissed him breathlessly, noses brushing, and pressed his way inside, bulldozing through the tight anxious ring of Starscream's entrance and collapsing delicate callipers outwards. Starscream cried softly, claws slipping into the cables at the back of Megatron's neck.

Megatron gave him a moment, shifting to stimulate internal sensors, warming him all the way to his core. When he felt ready and wet, he nodded, and Megatron began fragging him with merciless abandon. Just the way he liked it.

Buckets and bottles clattered and smashed underpede, vents roared and mouths gasped against cheeks as Megatron's rutted into him, clang after clang, so fast Starscream couldn't distinguish between the pleasure of one shove to the next.

His foot slipped on the rung and Megatron caught him, hefted him up by the thighs until his legs were locked about his waist. He was flattened against the shelf again, the new angle closer, deeper, and just as fast.

He overloaded quickly. He always did when Megatron ruined him so well, without a care for their time limit or their close proximity to the negotiation room filled with comrades that could surely, *surely* hear Starscream's growing cries and pleas.

The entire storage unit was shaking, and as Megatron's climax neared his viciousness increased. Wild, brutal thrusts knocked Starscream against the shelves until the entire thing was swaying, bottles falling and crashing about them. Starscream clung tight, no more able to stop his cries than he was to stop the spike pillaging his aching, sensitive valve.

Then Megatron groaned hoarsely, optics sparking bright. Starscream used every bit of strength he had left in his weak callipers to clamp his valve down on Megatron's spike when warmth finally began to spill and fill him. Megatron's punishing drive mellowed into staggered little bucks, throat working as his own sensor net surged with pleasure.

Starscream pressed a fluttering constellation of kisses to Megatron's steam dampened throat, stroking his shoulders as released pressure hissed and Megatron began to soften.

"I wouldn't get through these negotiations without you," Megatron admitted hoarsely, stroking Starscream's thighs.

"I know," Starscream smirked, wriggling to be let down. A bottle cracked under his pede when he stepped on it, but there was no use cleaning up after themselves. They'd be back tomorrow.

There was a sudden bang on the door.

"They're waiting for yer." Ironhide bellowed through the door, sounding grumpier than usual. *"Get yer panels back on n' get out 'ere."*

Starscream reluctantly rearranged himself as Megatron went to open the door. Ironhide was stood there, a sour look on his face. He clearly didn't want to look at the carnage they'd made of the supply closet. Starscream slipped under Megatron's arm and pulled him along.

"Thank you, Ironhide." He said sweetly.

Ironhide grunted.

Megatron grunted back at him, just as rudely.

Back in the negotiation room everyone was waiting for them. Knowing it was going to be another long afternoon of listening to Optimus talk and Prowl argue and Megatron try and bait them all, Starscream paused before heading to his seat, passing one last kiss onto Megatron.

Strong servos caught his shoulders and yanked him away before he could do much more than brush their lips together.

"I think you've done enough of *that* for one day." Ratchet was growling, steering him back to the Autobot side of the table, towards a disapproving Prime. He plonked him down in his seat, immune to the venomous glare Starscream was throwing him.

"And stop playing with him under the table!" Ratchet added, already halfway to his seat, loud enough for everyone to hear.

Prime looked even more disappointed, and Starscream wasn't surprised to find himself being moved along the table once again, right down to the furthest end.

Behind Prime's back Megatron winked at him, and made a well known gesture by slipping his glossa between his first two digits and making a licking motion. Starscream hid a smile behind his fist.

"Megatron." Optimus growled.

Megatron cleared his vocaliser and shuffled his datapads, acting like he hadn't just been caught making vulgar gestures across the negotiation table. "So we were discussing space-bridge usage?"

Starscream watched the negotiations fall back on track, and entertained himself through the boredom with daydreams about what else his Decepticon warlord would be doing with that clever glossa of his tonight.

Chapter End Notes

If you enjoyed this fic stay tuned for spinoffs featuring Megatron vandalising Optimus's office and Starscream finally trining himself to Thundercracker and Skywarp.

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